

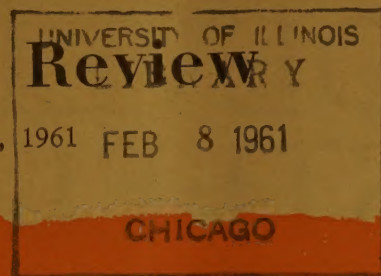
The Listener

and
B.B.C. Television **Review**

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TRAVEL BOOK NUMBER

Contributions by Quentin Bell, Andrew Boyd, W. G. Hoskins, Patricia Hutchins, Idris Parry, Henry Reed, Sir Steven Runciman, Martin Shuttleworth, Burns Singer, Norman St. John-Stevas, C. Henry Warren, and H. G. Whiteman

This is Broadsheet No. 21 from the City of Steel

NEW DEVELOPMENT IN STEELMAKING!



This is a British car body—typical of many which are built from sheet steel, and composed of many complex pressings. The wings are among the more difficult parts to press into their intricate shape. The new VLN steel is helping with problems of this kind.

Revolutionary VLN steel cuts down nitrogen, gives greater flexibility

From this year on, the versatility of steel, the flexibility of steel, will be even greater. The reason: a new steelmaking process developed at The Steel Company of Wales, Britain's City of Steel.

The name of the process is VLN; in full, Very Low Nitrogen. And the significance of VLN is fundamental.

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In making steel for this purpose, a vital consideration is its

nitrogen content; for the less nitrogen a steel contains, the longer it will remain ductile. Mild sheet steel made by the new VLN process has the lowest nitrogen content in the world.

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The VLN process is unique. Already it has been proved not just in theory but in practice. As you read this, a VLN plant, consisting of three oxygen/steam blown 50-ton converters, is in full production at the City of Steel. So confident is the Company in the future for VLN that it is about to install a fourth converter.

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THE STEEL COMPANY OF WALES LIMITED

The Listener

Vol. LXV. No. 1659

Thursday January 12 1961

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Challenge to Prosperity—II

CHRISTOPHER CHATAWAY, M.P., considers how to expand British industry

This is the second of two articles based on the recent B.B.C. television series in which H. F. R. Catherwood, George Darling, M.P., and Andrew Shonfield also took part

DO most people produce no more work than they have to? One graph said to be fairly typical of the ship-building industry indicates the fluctuations in a day's electricity consumption in a certain yard and thus the intensity of work over the eight hours. Though the day begins theoretically at 7.30 the consumption of electricity does not rise appreciably until 8.0. There is a similar delayed rise during the half hour after the lunch break. Towards the end of the morning, and three-quarters of an hour before the final hooter, the graph shows a sharp decline in effort. There are, in addition, sudden dips over fifteen or thirty minutes before 9.0 a.m., before 11.0 a.m., and just after 3.0 p.m., each presumably indicating a tea break.

At the Birmingham College of Technology Dr. Tom Lupton, head of the Industrial Administration Department, has reason to believe that employees in many industries limit their work output. He has conducted an intensive study of this subject, spending six months working in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs himself. The way, he believes, in which most people control the amount of work they do is through manipulation of piece-work systems. In most systems one finds 'tight' rates and 'loose'

rates. The tight rates are the ones on which it is difficult to make money and the loose rates are the ones on which it is easier to earn well. While managements are continually looking for ways to tighten up 'loose' rates to what they consider a reasonable level, work people often go to considerable effort to preserve them as they are. The common device for taking advantage of a system is to book in times which do not expose the loose rates and to complain loudly and frequently about the tightness of the relatively tight rates.

Dr. Lupton is in little doubt, on the basis of his research, that a substantial proportion of British labour produces nothing like the output of which it is capable. He takes the view, which appeared a little over-sophisticated to me, that all this is probably socially desirable since the perpetual battle of wits with authority fosters working-class cohesion and sense of community. 'If one is anxious for people to want to work more', he says, 'one has to instil into working-class people what I call middle-class values—long-term planning of careers, provision for the education of one's children, the collection of non-consumables and the buying of a house. In short, getting an investment in one's life and career which, although a growing practice, is alien to the traditional working-class pattern of life'.

How to increase the contribution of labour and the trade unions to the country's prosperity was the theme of the third programme in our recent television series 'Challenge to Pros-

perity'. More information for their members, and a greater willingness and pressure from the trade unions to ensure higher productivity—these were the needs to which George Darling, Labour M.P. for the Hillsborough division of Sheffield, directed our attention in the programmes.

A highly successful non-union firm in which people certainly do work hard is a caravan factory run by Mr. William Knott near Parkstone in Dorset. Our intention in visiting the firm was to look at the working attitudes that produce such success and to probe the views of employees in such a non-union concern about productivity and the unions. During the past ten years output from this factory has expanded from fifty caravans a week to 350. In spite of the existence of freight charges and tariff barriers, the vehicles sell well in Europe and in Canada. In Germany the firm is able to sell at £40 to £50 below the price of German competitors.

'We think', said Mr. Knott, 'that the way to keep our 800 employees happy and to keep the unions from interfering with us is to give them plenty of money'. Rates of pay are high for the area and so are the hours worked. The men can virtually decide for themselves how many hours extra they will put in and many stay up to ten and twelve hours a day. We were there filming all day and I have never seen a shop in which people worked with such sustained and demoniacal energy. Ninety per cent. of the labour is on piece work. Earnings are generally shared equally between gangs of about six, and caravans are produced at an astonishing rate. The whole operation appears literally bursting with energy.

Between one department and another there is a gaping, ragged hole in the wall. 'We never had time', Mr. Knott explained, 'to make a proper hole, so we just knocked down these bricks to get from one building to another. Again, this extraction duct—we originally had a quotation for that job for £5,000; we decided to do it ourselves by making a box section which cost us approximately £50 and it is very practical'.

Although Mr. Knott suggested to me that there was virtually no desire to bring in the unions, since everybody earned so well, I found a number of men who said they would prefer it to be a union shop. 'We might then have a canteen to get a cup of tea', said one. 'The tea they make here seems to be made from cardboard dust, not tea'. But the complaints seemed to me to be mostly of this routine, almost ritual, nature. I doubted whether there was much serious dissatisfaction. Asked why they had chosen to work in this non-union firm when other work was available, even those who favoured unionism admitted that they preferred to earn the higher wages, though conditions might not be so good and hours generally longer.

There were many who said they liked the firm's working methods. 'If we had the union in', said one, 'I should not be able to do the job I am doing because of demarcation regulations'.

'The trouble would be', said another, 'that our wages would drop because the firm wouldn't be able to afford to allow us to work extra hours if they had to pay double-time and time and a half'.

Nobody suggested that British industry would be better off without unions. But a firm like Mr. Knott's prompts the thought that in certain circumstances the outstanding concern can function better without the restrictions that many unions impose today, and without the wild-cat strikes that failing leadership within the unions seems so often to be unable to control.

An example of a union in which there seems to be a serious lack of the internal communications that Mr. Darling advocates is the Seamen's. Among a group of seamen in Liverpool, striking more against their own union than the employers, we tried to discover how such a rift appears between union leaders and their

members. 'The union's never been with its members. The leaders are never in touch with us—never. The General Secretary's been invited down to Liverpool during this strike to talk to the men, but what did he say? No, I wouldn't address those men on their bombed sites'.

It may be true that last summer's strike was encouraged by communists and perhaps initiated by the Canadian seamen for their own purposes. The extent of the stoppage showed clearly, however, that there was a great gulf and a collapse of confidence between the union leadership and many of its members.

Sir Tom Yates, the former General Secretary, was inclined to dismiss the whole thing as the work of a few irresponsible hot-heads. 'I don't feel that any changes are needed in the union's arrangements. The people who have criticized the union are those who have never taken an active part in it'. But how, I was left wondering, are these people ever to be persuaded to play an active role unless changes are made?

The Seamen's Union is probably an extreme example of a union's super-structure becoming divorced from its membership. But whether one thinks of unofficial strikes or of rank-and-file obstruction to mechanization and progress, the need evidently is for good leadership within the unions.

In our programme Mr. Catherwood (director of a large engineering firm), Mr. Andrew Shonfield, economic editor of *The Observer*, and Mr. Darling were united in urging a more professional leadership and particularly a higher grade of official on the unions' middle rungs. How is that to be achieved? One answer Mr. Darling suggested is higher union dues. 'The trouble in this country is that, apart from some of the older craft unions', he said, 'trade unionists are getting trade union protection and trade union organization on the cheap. Contributions just are not sufficient to maintain a professional staff with good technical advice'.

Mr. Catherwood contrasted the expert knowledge brought by many American unions to the conference table with the relative amateurishness of British officials. Better union officials could do much to

create the atmosphere for higher wages and higher productivity. But the price of these improvements, as Mr. Shonfield stressed, might well be more redundancies. In fact a higher mobility of labour seems a pre-condition for faster expansion. Wages cannot usefully rise faster than productivity but higher wages with perhaps more severance pay would in turn stimulate the greater mobility of labour that is essential to increased productivity. Where are the unions' leaders to convince their members that faster progress even in a full employment society demands quicker mechanization and more redundancies? The first necessity, in Mr. Shonfield's words, is union leaders who will say to their men: 'Live in the modern world; if you want unionism which is professional you have got to pay for it'.

The initiative to experiment and to modernize must, however, come from management. A depressing indication of conservatism is to be found in the field of computer control. It is estimated that American industry has nearly 4,000 computers installed compared with 193 in use in Britain. Mr. Warren, field sales manager in London of the world's largest manufacturers of computers, finds a general resistance here to new techniques. 'British management', he said, 'is at the moment very slow to realize the enormous potentialities of absolute control of an organization. Businesses in Germany, Italy, and France have a far better appreciation of control problems'.

Confirmation came from Mr. Toothill, one of the leading men responsible for the manufacture of computer control for machine tools in this country. The first to adopt new ideas in this field, he said, are always government departments, the research departments of universities, and the aircraft industry. Without the



Sir Tom Yates, former General Secretary of the National Union of Seamen

encouragement and support that his firm has had from these sources they would never have been able to carry on in recent years with the pioneering work in which they have been engaged. 'Computers are now going into banks and all sorts of places', said Mr. Toothill, 'but it has taken something like seven years from the time we started talking to people to the time we began to get orders'. The trouble, he believes, is twofold. British industry simply does not have the kind of experimental approach that is common in the United States, and secondly, much of Britain's senior management is remote from today's advanced technology which was not taught when the men now running industry were at school or college.

The fourth and last programme sought means to produce in British industry a more adventurous atmosphere and a more expansionist mood. One invigorating expansionist is Sir Robert Shone, an executive member of the Iron and Steel Board. Steel production has been rising over the past decade almost twice as fast as the national industrial average, but Sir Robert believes it could rise at least half as fast again. A changed method of local and state taxation of industry would, he believes, help expansion considerably.

Industry is at present rated on the basis of the value of its property and fixed plant. Yet money collected from rates is mainly used to provide services for people—education, sewers, health services, and so on. It would be logical therefore to determine a firm's payment to a local authority on the number of people it employs. Such an arrangement would also encourage industry to use labour economically, whereas the present system acts to discourage mechanization and success.

Similarly it would pay dividends, in Sir Robert's view, for some of the central government's taxation to be levied according



Sir Robert Shone, an executive member of the Iron and Steel Board

to the pay-roll of a business, as is the practice in a number of countries abroad.

To the suggestion that all this might lead to unemployment, Sir Robert points to the fact that labour is Britain's main shortage and has been for many years. The object would not be to cause unemployment, but to get better results from the full employment of labour. The aim would be to ensure that our scarce manpower is moved out of less efficient firms, which would be hard hit by the kind of taxation system Sir Robert advocates, into the more progressive businesses.

To many it must seem that such a movement is unlikely until the tempo of competition within British industry is stepped up. Is the need required a more competitive one? Recent legislation against restrictive practices has had some effect on industry in the last four years. About 2,300 agreements have had to be registered, and of these over a thousand have either been abandoned or had the restrictive elements removed from them. Sixty-three cases have been brought before the Restrictive Practices Court, and

only three of these have been declared consistent with the public interest.

George Darling believes, however, that there are serious loopholes in present legislation, and both Mr. Catherwood and Mr. Shonfield urge the necessity for a more vigorously competitive mood. Those, in contrast, who cautioned against excessive competition in our programme were Mr. Rumble, a retailer from Farnborough, who like most of his colleagues is dismayed at any suggestion of abolishing resale price maintenance, and—a very unlikely apologist—Mr. C. O. Stanley. Stanley conceded that he was now in a somewhat embarrassing position. Not so many months ago he was vigorously attacking the 'telephone ring'. Now that he is inside the ring people may ask, as he confesses, whether he is still against rings.

'All rings ought to be attacked', was Stanley's answer. 'Any ring in the long run reduces things to a common denominator of the least efficient. But if we do not work out of the situation that we are in by degrees rather than by shock we may do more damage than benefit to the economy. If we destroy rings too quickly in fact we will do harm'.

None of the team believed there was time to go slowly. It was shock tactics that they felt were needed. At the moment British industry is progressing more slowly than that in nearly every other European country. In the near future there may not be the option of continuing to progress slowly with our present mood and methods unchanged. Without a rapid acceleration we may cease to progress at all.

Mr. Catherwood and Mr. Shonfield urged the prime importance of a more rapid movement of both capital and labour out of inefficient firms into more progressive enterprises. So far as management at all levels is concerned they should be stirring themselves, said Mr. Catherwood: 'am I working for a progressive firm, or am I not?' And a move may well be the proper sequel if the answer is negative. All this, as Mr. Shonfield recognized, amounts to a remedy that may seem harsh. It is asking, as he put it, for a great many more bankruptcies. Mr. Shonfield laid final emphasis on the French example. They have given top priority to expansion; they have valued growth more highly than confidence in their currency. A national plan was agreed, and targets set for individual industries. Britain's need, Mr. Shonfield urged, is a similarly determined drive for expansion. Mr. Catherwood's last word was a plea for a reorientation of outlook. For nearly a century the national will has been geared to the running of a great empire, and it has been well run. But that empire no longer exists. Today we are in the same position as the Dutch or the Swiss. Let us recognize it, and accord to our business a comparable place in the national life.



An operator at the controls of an IBM 650 computer which is capable of about 138,000 logical decisions a minute. Fifteen of these computers are in use in this country for both scientific and commercial work

The United States and Cuba

ALISTAIR COOKE'S 'Letter from America'

LAST Thursday night* the Security Council of the United Nations adjourned without saying whether Cuba was right or wrong in charging the United States with aggressive intentions. It just did not find substantial evidence and let it go at that. The delegates drifted out of the Chamber, yawned, and went home to bed.

'Cuba Waits!'

On Friday morning we woke up to hear that Cuba had overnight been turned into what the news broadcasters call an armed camp. The regular army was on an instant alert. It was greatly strengthened, we read, by youth work battalions and by the new woman's combat brigade. The swarthy and often beguiling young women of Cuba were now shown in an improvised costume that might win first prize in a competition for Miss International Brigade Fighter of 1961: a peasant's blouse, vaguely Russian, paratrooper's trousers, a Cuban beret, and a leather belt hitched to a tommy gun made in Czechoslovakia. In the pictures we saw they looked very purposeful, and so did the sandbags that formed parapets on the Havana waterfront, and the lines of anti-aircraft guns poking out of them. Dr. Castro had ordered every available weapon on the beleaguered island to be brought out and cocked in readiness. Ack-ack batteries scan the sky. There are no parades, because no single soldier can be spared. Cuba, said a radio commentator over a squawky telephone circuit, from Havana—'Cuba waits!'

For what? Well, for the invasion. I was looking over the menacing pictures of the Havana shoreline, which were not unlike the pictures of the Kent and Sussex coasts after Dunkirk. My small daughter came in before she went to school and saw me looking and brooding. And she asked me why Cuba was so excited and I mentioned the word invasion. 'Who's going to invade them?' she asked. 'I think', I said, 'it's the United States'. 'Are we', she asked, with that dreadful clear-eyed gravity of an eleven-year-old, 'are we going to invade Cuba?' 'Cuba or England', I said, 'we haven't made up our minds—I guess Eisenhower will decide'. She didn't quite get it, but she got the tone all right and she said, 'What's the matter with Castro?' It is a good question and during the past week Americans have been puckering their foreheads and trying to answer it.

Quaint but Tragic Fantasy?

It is not conceivable that Castro believes the United States is now going, or is ever likely, to invade Cuba. If he does believe it, there are only two possible explanations of such a quaint but tragic fantasy. One is that he is, as are most of the barbudos (the bearded ones) a young man in revolt, a young man bearing out his original picture, his schoolboy picture, of the traditional enemy of Latin-American history—the Yanqui, the Colossus of the North—the predatory investor mining and digging and planting and surveying for ores and metals and building automobile and telephone plants; employing many Cubans to be sure, but also sending home the profits; a greedy exploiter spouting democracy but also indulging in such stirring contradictions as helping the Cubans achieve their liberty from Spain, and then passing a bill in the U.S. Senate which limited the sovereignty of the Cubans by forcing them to add an amendment to their new constitution which allowed the United States to intervene at any time, if she felt that the government of Cuba was 'inadequate' to protect life (liberty, of course) and property. The question always was whose life, and whose liberty, and whose property? And the hollow Cuban answer was always 'our lives, but their liberty and their property'.

When Dr. Castro came up to New York in September and delivered himself of that four hour and fifty minute diatribe—a

remarkable piece of oratory, by the way—he inevitably mentioned that notorious Platt Amendment of 1900. The way Castro pronounced the name Platt, with a contemptuous falling inflection, you'd have thought that Senator Platt, who died in 1905, was at least as important an ogre in our times as Senator McCarthy was in his. The Platt Amendment, the most conservative American historians are now willing to write, made Cuba practically an American protectorate and certainly was the pretext for military intervention from the north in the uprisings of 1906, 1912, 1917 and 1920. The Platt Amendment was not abrogated, by the way, until 1934—which does seem to preserve the Cubans' unflattering stereotype of Uncle Sam right up to our own time. Not one American schoolboy in a hundred knows this, but I'll bet most Cuban schoolboys have been brought up on it. Castro would be seven in 1934, an impressionable age in boys both bright and dull. Castro is very bright indeed and so is the flame of hatred of the U.S. that he has kept burning, from childhood on. Even by his lights, though, America at last saw the democratic absurdity of the Platt amendment, and, ever since Roosevelt's 'good-neighbour' policy, has abandoned any thought of sending the Marines into any Central American hot spot. But I am afraid that this has nothing to do with the case of Dr. Castro. Embittered wives do not lose their contempt for a bad husband as soon as the divorce papers are filed. Castro and his generation—in other Latin-American countries we are going to hear from too—went right on sweating to break the Yanqui chains that had now turned, in fact, to chains of grocery stores.

Schoolboy's Vision of Revenge

At best, then, it is likely that Castro is realizing a schoolboy's vision of revenge and that he cannot give up the idea that the enemy to watch and hold is the United States; much as boys of my generation—who dreamed of men in spiked helmets and who then followed the ghoulish history of Germany from Munich to Belsen, cannot root out their embedded fear of a united and doubly powerful Germany.

There is an alternative explanation for Castro's raging belief in the imminence of an American invasion. It is, simply and sadly, that he is a man who cannot live without looking over his shoulder for the bullies and tyrants who are coming to get him. A distinguished Cuban Embassy employee of his who was up here, a woman, quit the Cuban diplomatic service about six months ago and, in a television interview, admitted to a close friendship with Castro and said she was convinced that he was mentally a very sick man, a young man of intelligence, enormous magnetism, recurring ulcers, and a mania for having his own way. This may well be the truer explanation (though it would simply enforce the fanatic prejudices of his schoolbooks) but it doesn't help us much. Hitler too was a psychopath, and Goebbels was another—a very brilliant man, who wrote in his diary one sentence I have never forgotten. Goebbels was, as a youth, a great admirer of the novels of Dostoevsky and the anarchic world of the unconscious that they describe. One night, after a fascinated session with *The Idiot*, he ran off to a beer garden and met a friend and pointed to the book and said: 'Just think—if you could get political power, you could actually make these things happen in life'. It is a sentence that guaranteed the devastation of Europe.

Let us look on the brighter side, which I must say can be also the more superficial side, of practical politics. Neither President Eisenhower, nor Secretary of State Herter, nor the incoming Secretary of State Mr. Dean Rusk (who talked with Mr. Herter this week) can explore the irritations of foreign policy on the assumption that the people who produce them are insane. (By the way, I think the communists are less naïve about the roots of effective political action; they have shown—from Azerbaijan to

Budapest and perhaps to Cuba—that the very quality to stimulate in poor and bitter peoples is the sense of being exploited, whether that sense is healthy or neurotic.) But we of the West cling to the noble delusion that man is a rational being and that he is at best a man with a just grievance, at worst a man with a grudge, which can be cured with a treaty of mutual assistance and a Senate appropriation for foreign aid.

There is no doubt here, among tough-minded and fair-minded people, that if Castro had even half-maintained the promise of his first days, he could have had all this and more, because there does lurk beneath the consciousness of the State Department the guilty feeling that the United States *has* milked the island kingdom in the past, bringing succour no doubt to the half-skilled worker but also bringing lavish revenue to American investors in ways that were always thought legitimate but which are now thought to be cruel and greedy. When that crop of bearded youth hacked its way up from Oriente Province, the Batista, having promised to take the field himself, changed his mind and took a fast 'plane—on that day Castro was an all-American hero, for he combined the appeal of Davy Crockett coming out of the mountains with the appeal of George Washington at Valley Forge, a brave and harassed soldier with a small, ragged army somehow surviving all sorts of winter humiliations and whipping the army of an established tyrant.

Then, the first misgivings, you remember, were about his revolutionary tribunals with their reminder of *A Tale of Two Cities* and gleeful mobs in sport stadiums. Then his suppression of the

opposition press. Then his reversal of rulings by the Cuban Supreme Court. Then his revealing, if hysterical, remark about 200,000 gringo corpses that would lie on Cuban soil if the United States ever attempted to invade it. Then the mock funeral processions through the streets of Havana with each coffin bearing the trade-mark of an American firm or industry. Then his encouragement to young people to eavesdrop on their parents and maybe even betray them. Since then the pattern of his seizure of industries, the organizing of the youth brigades, the discovery of plots and laboriously faked documents supposedly issuing from Washington, have been laborious parodies of communist strategy. The newspaper pundits here are seeking the method in Castro's madness and are adducing such arguments as: that the hullabaloo over the imminent American invasion is a clumsy cover-up for more hard-headed aggressions in Laos; that Castro is making hay while the sun shines on Kennedy in Palm Beach and is hoping to embarrass the new administration and make demands on it impossible for the next President to fulfil. The third explanation is that Castro is beginning to recognize real enemies on the inside and that he is, like all dictators whose grip is failing, inventing a big enemy on the outside.

That brings us back to the slapdash response of the man in the street. That Castro is, simply, a madman. It may be true. But if it is, then—remembering Goebbels—Dr. Castro, with sympathetic exploitation by the Russians and the prospect of his own nuclear weapon, would be much more of a threat to us than most of us have ever seriously imagined.—*Home Service*

Will Laos Become Another Korea?

By ANTHONY LAWRENCE, B.B.C. Far East correspondent

IF you talk to Asians in this part of the world—particularly the kind of Chinese business and professional men who keep abreast of affairs—they will express to you a cynical, smiling despair at what is happening in Laos. Other people here for whom daily life is largely a struggle for survival are not even sure where Laos is: ignorance is not confined to the West. But even the rickshaw men and the fishermen are becoming aware that somewhere down in the Nanyang, the Southern Ocean, something big and bad is happening.

The question is whether Laos will develop into another Korea—a war involving a great number of outside Powers. The elements of big-scale conflict are certainly present. This small, land-locked kingdom of Laos is not being left alone to get on with its peaceful way of living. Two rival power groups—one installed in the capital and the other strong in the Northern Provinces—are receiving arms and supplies from outside; one group from the Americans; the other from the communist bloc. And although the left-wing group have been driven out of the capital, the tide is now running in their favour. The forces of this group—and they include neutralists, non-communists as well as dedicated Marxists—appear to be better organized and better led and to command more popular support than the American-supported forces of the right.

So this is the question for the Americans: are they going to allow their friends to be destroyed? Or are they going to intervene? If they do, then the chances are that there will be massive intervention from the other side, from North Vietnam backed by Communist China which has a common frontier with Laos to the north. The right-wing forces in Laos are already alleging invasion from North Vietnam, although they have produced no proof and few observers really believe it.

But the situation is dangerous enough. The Americans feel strongly about Laos, into which they have poured something like \$300,000,000 of aid with little to show for it. They have always been extremely concerned about communist infiltration in the whole of this area; they were very uneasy about the peace settlement which followed the Indo-China war and the disaster of Dien Bien Phu. They did not agree with the spirit of the peace

settlement which aimed at a neutral Indo-China, and they never signed the treaty. They wanted to make Laos a strong, anti-communist outpost. But everybody who visits Laos knows this is impossible. For one thing, any strong government is difficult in a country lacking roads, education, and administrative services; where the people's loyalty is to their local chieftains. The best that can be hoped for in a country like this, in the opinion of most Western observers, is a coalition-type government which can hold a balance between all the conflicting local interests and be neutral in the Cold War. But to the Americans this meant a government which would allow the communists to manoeuvre their way to power, so they would not have it. They supplied arms to a right-wing group, and now the communist bloc has for some time past been supplying arms to the left. This is a civil war where intervention from outside has already developed, though not, so far, with fighting troops. That might be the next step.

But the point is that the civil war in Laos is already bitter and there are no signs of conciliation. The end will not be a situation just like Korea. For one thing, there will be no United Nations action against the left wing and the communists in Laos, because so few United Nations members, with the exception of the United States and Thailand, feel that such action would be justified or would accomplish anything except perhaps start a world war. But the end of this unhappy business may well be a partition of Laos, with communist forces setting up a government in the northern half and a pro-American government in the south. This would satisfy the security demands of Communist China and North Vietnam, and it is probably the best the Americans could hope for. The feeling of America's friends is that this could have been avoided, if only a government of conciliation had been given a chance. They feel that American policy, which has been so successful in the Far East in the past eight years in containing communism and raising living standards, has gone on the wrong track in Laos. Nobody here wants to see Laos turn into another Korea. If it does, the decision will be made in Washington, and the United States will be practically going it alone.

—'From Our Own Correspondent' (Home Service)

Marxism and the Soviet Intelligentsia

By EUGENE KAMENKA

SOME years ago, reviewing an English abridgement of Sukhanov's fascinating *Notes on the Russian Revolution*, I wrote:

There is no country in the world in which intellectuals have stood so definitely apart as a class and have combined so many contradictions as in Russia. The Russian *intelligent* tortured himself with moral and theoretical doubts while his clumsy fingers fashioned the bombs of political protest. He wrote pamphlets calling for insurrection, yet saw himself as an eternal Hamlet, paralysed by the depth of his understanding. To the Western world he was an unbelievable mixture of Bohemian and revolutionary. He could spend nights talking aesthetics in the dingy rooms of London and Geneva; he could also burst armed into the streets of St. Petersburg to lead the only successful revolution in the world dominated entirely by intellectuals.

Twice, in the hectic months of 1917, the Russian intelligentsia seized authority. Yet the same months saw the intelligentsia lay the irrevocable foundations of its own destruction. The Bolshevik Revolution did what no nineteenth-century Romanov could do—it wiped out, almost overnight, a century-old tradition of protest and criticism. It destroyed the intelligentsia of Russia.

Soviet Statistics

Soviet leaders profess to admire the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia for its devotion to 'the people' and its anti-Tsarism. They decry it for its Hamletism, its woolly idealism, its predilection for talk and its lack of discipline. But Soviet leaders would certainly not admit that the Soviet Union has destroyed its intelligentsia. In 1936 Stalin proclaimed that the Soviet Union had emerged from the period of transition and become a socialist society. In it, the antagonistic classes of the past had been replaced by the non-antagonistic classes of workers and peasants and the 'stratum' of the intelligentsia. In 1926, according to Soviet statistics, the intelligentsia had numbered 2,725,000 persons; by 1937 it had risen to 9,591,000; today it stands at some 16,000,000. Sputniks and rockets, ballet dancers and philosophical congresses advertise its existence and its achievements; salary scales and material privileges envied by Western intellectuals bear witness to the social respect in which it is held; 'Soviet people', as the Russian hand-outs say, are flocking to the universities and institutes of higher learning to become part of it.

The 'new intelligentsia', alas, is not the old. In the sense in which we have learned from Turgenev and Dostoevsky to use the word 'intelligentsia' it is not an intelligentsia at all. The pre-revolutionary *intelligent* could not be counted by statisticians. He had no distinguishing marks outside his mind. He was not to be defined by his formal education, his occupation, his father's position, or his wealth. He was defined by his attitude, his critical attitude, to the government and the life around him. He was a man who thought and talked and wrote of change.

This critical attitude, this hope for change, which brought together men and women of different backgrounds and positions, had its origins in the social situation. Its deepest roots lay in the impact of Western education on a society largely agricultural, unindustrialized, and dominated by semi-despotic, semi-feudal relationships. In the Old Russia, the *intelligent* found no market for his abilities, no rewards for intelligent service, no real encouragement to careerism. He became an outsider—a critic and a rebel. (In Portugal today, similar conditions are producing a similar though less confident intelligentsia.) As a critic and a rebel, the Russian *intelligent* supported Kerensky's February revolution with enthusiasm—he believed fervently in a free, democratic socialist Russia. (Socialism and freedom had not yet parted company.) Toward the Bolshevik revolution in October he felt at best ambivalence. The Bolshevik leaders also came from the intelligentsia, but they were men of a special kind. They had cast off their Hamletism for an obsession with discipline and

power; they had exchanged their role as intellectuals and their creative and critical way of life for fanatical devotion and obedience to a centralized political party that allowed no discord.

The Specialist—but Not his Heritage

States often think they can do without criticism; they know they cannot do without educators and specialists. Despotism can sever the connexion between the two—for a period at least. The revolution needed the specialist, it did not need his intellectual heritage. The men of truly creative but independent intelligence—such men as the poets Blok and Yesenin—were out of favour from the start; the brief flowering of avant-garde communism—the group gathered round Lunacharsky and Kollontai—was quickly found too 'undisciplined', too critical, too dangerous. Obedience became the supreme virtue. Denunciations of bourgeois individualism and the un-Marxist conception that men were potential traitors through their 'class-origin' alone were trained against the critical and creative *intelligent*. Rarely the son of workers, he had to prove his loyalty over and over again. Many intellectuals had already fled in the civil war, others now were arrested or banished; most were taught to find safety in humble obscurity as book-keepers, librarians, and minor functionaries. Then came the Stalinist dictatorship and the period of the 'great purges' in the nineteen-thirties. It was the period that saw a tremendous growth in the numbers of what Soviet statisticians call 'the intelligentsia'. It was also the period in which the last sparks of critical independence, the last links with a great intellectual heritage, were completely destroyed.

Who, then, are the 'new Soviet intelligentsia', trained, as most of them are, in the Soviet Union, knowing little or nothing of life outside or before their allegedly socialist society? They are not men who talk and think and write of change. They are not critics and they are not rebels. Their connexion with the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia is virtually nil. The vast majority of them are what we in England would call 'white-collar workers': administrators, accountants, book-keepers, factory managers, technicians, teachers and scientists. Such men were emerging in Russia as a group distinct from the critical, non-careerist intelligentsia even before the revolution, from the beginning of industrialization around 1870. Their vast proliferation in the Soviet Union is a measure of its growing industrialization and of its bureaucratization—it is not a measure of the growth of the Soviet critical or creative spirit. White-collar men, in Russia as in the West, are overwhelmingly uncritical careerists, with a special stake in the system that gives them some power, prestige and cake. Some 30 per cent. of the Soviet intelligentsia, indeed, consists of the men whom less fortunate Russians call the *nachalstvo*—the bosses who run the factories, the tractor stations, the electricity undertakings, and the collective farms.

Not a Ruling Class?

The growing prestige and importance of the Russian 'intelligentsia' of experts and managers makes it tempting to think of them as a class occupying a position of power parallel to that of the capitalist in capitalist society. At the turn of the century, indeed, a Polish revolutionary, Wacław Machajski, proclaimed from his banishment in Siberia that Marx had failed to recognize that knowledge and education were themselves a form of 'capital' and that the possessors of this capital—the intelligentsia—were themselves a separate class with specific class interests. Their concern with socialist ideology, he predicted, would prove no more lasting than the bourgeois concern with freedom at the time of the French revolution: they would use socialist ideology in order to get a mass basis in the proletariat for the overthrow of private money capitalism. Then, by refusing to socialize the

means of intellectual production, they would establish themselves as a new ruling class.

Personally, I do not believe that the Russian intelligentsia constitutes such a ruling class, any more than I believe that the Chinese *literati* or the Chinese landlords constituted a ruling class—in Marx's sense—in the Celestial Empire. I prefer the analysis suggested by Karl Wittfogel—perhaps somewhat too sweepingly—in his *Oriental Despotism*. He suggests that communism is in the tradition of the 'hydraulic despotism' of Ancient Egypt, Babylon, Inca Peru, India, and China—that it rests on economic and social conditions which have helped to centralize power in the state and have made it stronger than the rest of society put together. The communist intelligentsia does not have power through its privileges: it has privileges through its power, and its power depends upon its function within the administrative machinery dominated by the party and the state. It is not a class dominating the government, but a class created by the government and dependent upon it.

Now, if the very existence of the Soviet intelligentsia carries with it an un-Marxist aura, can one say that the new intelligentsia at least represents a section critical of doctrinaire Marxism, a section whose influence is likely to be exerted in the directions of intellectual liberalization and revision or abandonment of Marxist orthodoxy? Here, too, I think, one must be careful. The vast majority of the intelligentsia, like the vast majority of Soviet youth, accept Marxism uncritically without being deeply interested in it. They do not ask how one can solve seeming difficulties; they are content to leave that to 'the experts', *i.e.*, the party ideologists. The Soviet careerist accepts the fetishisms of his society as the Western careerist accepts the fetishisms of ours; he has learnt to think what is convenient to him and to say what it is safe to say. Apart from this, he knows no other doctrines with which to compare Marxism; he has no intellectual gad-flies to stir him into thought.

Different Situation in Poland and Hungary

Here, the Russian situation is totally different from the situation in Poland or Hungary. In Poland and Hungary one had an active and critical intelligentsia, in intimate contact with the West, until fifteen years ago, and this intelligentsia, though somewhat cowed, has not been destroyed. Old university men have continued to teach, though more cautiously; Western books are read, ideas are discussed. It is no accident that the serious questionings of specific points of Marxist doctrine by top-flight intellectuals has come from these countries and not from Russia. When Russian philosophers go to a Marxist philosophical congress in Warsaw or in Prague they are conscious of going on a pilgrimage to a centre of higher learning.

In Russia itself, the rebirth of a critical spirit is a far slower and far more limited development. In the intellectual sphere, it is confined in the first place to the tiny proportion of the intelligentsia—some 5 per cent.—which Russians call the 'creative intelligentsia' of writers, university teachers, scientists, painters, musicians, etc. Painters, as Cézanne once said, are divine idiots—like musicians and ballerinas they are predominantly uncritical and even naïve outside their own field. The possibility of a critical relationship to Marxism in general is really confined to people in the literary and scientific fields—largely to those engaged in university teaching and research. Here, something not uninteresting has happened. The old kind of Bolshevik was a member of the pre-revolutionary critical intelligentsia, but he was also a man who was not expert at anything. To him Marxism had the tremendous appeal it still has for some young intellectuals: it gave him a systematic view, it enabled him to make intelligent comments on almost everything that has happened in human history without the back-breaking labour of becoming an expert in a specific field. Today, the Soviet Union does not produce Old Bolsheviks, but trained scientists, specialized historians, linguists, economists, and sociologists. To them the fact that the letters of Marxist orthodoxy do not always spell out the right conclusions in their own fields is becoming increasingly obvious—though they are usually sure that Marxism is right in general and even in particular in other people's fields. In some subjects, such as physics, there is simply a tendency increasingly to ignore Marxist methodology for practical purposes. Soviet scientists build

nuclear power stations and atom bombs without asking themselves how their techniques square with Engel's *Dialectics of Nature*. In other fields, such as history, Marxism cannot be ignored: here the tendency among the deeply learned is to state Marxist doctrine more cautiously, to emphasize its complexity, to condemn crude economic reductionism as 'crude' (*i.e.*, non-Marxist) Marxism. Since Marx himself was an extremely honest thinker at times, well aware of complexity, and never crude, invoking Marx's name in this connexion is far from preposterous.

A New Emphasis

Nevertheless, though increasing competence in special fields has tended to make the creative Soviet intelligentsia less doctrinaire, it has not made them more courageous or independent. It is typical that the intellectual liberalization of Marxism in the Soviet Union after the war, though it has aided intellectual life, did not have its origin in *intellectual* considerations. It stemmed patently from purely *political* requirements dictated by the party and the state. In 1936, when Soviet society allegedly attained socialism, the state and law, far from beginning to wither away, were patently becoming more powerful than ever. Internally, increasing attention came to be paid to traditional means of ensuring obedience and social stability—the inculcation of patriotism, of social duties and virtues, the attack on the radicalism of earlier communists. All these are elements of what communist theory regarded as a 'superstructure' simply reflecting an economic base; new emphasis therefore had to be put on the relative independence of the superstructure, on the role of law and morality as educational forces, and new scorn had to be cast on the former Marxist view that law and morality are class products in the interests of political hegemony. Now one even has Mr. Vyshinsky recommending that Russians should look at English law and borrow some of its features in order to ensure stability in their own legal institutions.

Mr. Khrushchev's comparative liberalizations also seem to me to be guided entirely by political motives of this kind. Stalin had become aware that Marxism gives very little guidance for the practical problems of political administration within the Soviet Union, though he was also concerned to have an ideology that would produce 'orthodoxy'; Mr. Khrushchev seems to be aware both of this and of the fact that Marxism also provided no guidance for the practical problems of international relations. The resultant liberalizations—designed to give the administration a freer hand—have also given the intellectuals a slightly freer hand. But they have not made the intelligentsia either free or critical; they do not reflect its power and they do not give it new power. The decline in culture, in critical standards, in opposition to careerism and security-seeking, is a world-wide phenomenon, but nowhere has it taken place more suddenly and emphatically than in the Soviet Union. The Russian revolution destroyed a critical cultured human being, and put in its place a competent robot, worked by political strings.

Based on a discussion in the Third Programme, in which Eugene Kamenka answered questions on this subject put by Anthony Schooling

'WHAT HAPPENED TO FALSTAFF'

by J. B. Priestley

A talk recently broadcast in the Third Programme, about the fat knight of Shakespeare's historical plays, will be printed in two parts, next week and the week after, in

THE LISTENER

and B.B.C. Television Review

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Blaming the Schoolmaster

PEOPLE who think about travel, as many naturally do at this time of year, may well feel envious of the schoolmasters and others who enjoy long holidays, often many weeks in the year, when they can, if they have the means or the enterprise, travel more extensively than most other classes of our society. Professor W. Arnold Lloyd, in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Education at the University of Cambridge*, observed in his opening sentence that 'some members of the University in 1960, like Charles Lamb in 1823, cherish among their apathies and antipathies, an imperfect sympathy for professionally trained schoolmasters'. The reasons for this antipathy are numerous. Sometimes it is felt, as Lamb felt, that they have to pretend to be 'superficially omniscient' and 'read tedious homilies to distasteful schoolboys'. Others tend to denigrate them as themselves being at heart schoolboys who have never quite grown up. Others again accuse them of overdoing—or else of underdoing—discipline. Few, one suspects, are as grateful to these devoted and often selfless teachers as they might be.

One difficulty in our modern world is, as Sir John Cockcroft implied in a recent speech, that grammar-school masters traditionally lay undue importance upon their pupils winning scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge. These schools, especially the fee-paying ones, are judged, or at least imagine that they are judged, by the number of such scholarships that they win each year. The attitude does not exist only in some snob 'public schools'. Indeed, recent statistics indicate that a high proportion of these scholarships are nowadays won from other secondary schools. Similarly, lower down the scholastic scale, emphasis is laid upon the number of boys and girls who win scholarships, or even entrances, into the more fashionable schools. For the educational system is a whole; and it is curious how when criticisms are aimed at the standards or methods in the universities, the university authorities frequently retort by blaming them upon the schools from which their students come. This applies in the United States of America as well as in Britain. If foreign critics claim that the standard in American State universities is too low, the American professor lays the blame on the State schools. Similarly if in Britain it is asserted that the younger students are too precocious, that is blamed on their having been rushed forward while in their schools.

Our own foreign critics, and our own 'Lucky Jims' would be inclined to argue that ultimately the trouble lies in the conception of 'the Establishment'. If the schoolmaster, and, in particular, the headmaster of a grammar school, shows himself more concerned over his bright pupils than over his backward ones, then he can justly retort that in this country schools and universities are in fact judged by the number of distinctions that they obtain and not upon the success with which they bring an all-round education and culture to the average boy or girl. 'The Establishment' today may be much larger than it used to be; and, if it is a myth, it is at least an extremely persuasive one. It is always easy to urge that it is more important to raise standards than to lower them. But of course it is possible that in a genuinely democratic society some dilution must be accepted both in schools and in the universities, if we want higher education to be more widespread than it is at present.

* *The Old and the New Schoolmaster* (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.)

What They Are Saying

Prospects for 1961

MR. KHRUSHCHEV'S GOODWILL MESSAGES to the West at the New Year were later amplified by Soviet commentators who claimed that the U.S.S.R. was doing everything possible to improve Russian-American relations, on which the peace of the world depended. At the same time they accused the Eisenhower Administration of making a last desperate effort to aggravate the situation by intervention in the Congo, Laos, and Cuba on the principle of 'Après moi le déluge'.

A commentary from Moscow in English for North America asked mildly:

Do not Eisenhower and his colleagues take too much on their shoulders? Do they not somewhat exaggerate their influence on the course of world events? Would it not be better if they took a more sober view and realized that the neutrality of this or that Asian or African state is the best alternative for the U.S.A., having regard to the actual balance of forces in the world today?

Another Russian commentator in the same service attacked an editorial in the *New York Herald-Tribune* which, he said, reflected the views of those who want the Kennedy Administration to use the same methods as its predecessor in dealing with the U.S.S.R. According to the Soviet broadcaster, they lay down as conditions for an improvement in American-Russian relations 'that the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America renounce the struggle for national independence . . . and that the U.S.S.R. accepts the unrealistic demands of the West for control without disarmament, a revision of the Soviet system, and so on'. A Moscow home service commentary dismissed as an 'obvious lie' Western interpretations that Mr. Khrushchev's appeal for better relations meant a change in Soviet policy.

As the gap in Western views on Laos narrowed and the chances of a negotiated settlement improved, the *New York Herald-Tribune* said of Prince Boun Oum's right-wing government:

The Prime Minister's anti-communism is staunch, but if we are to stake everything on him we should be sure he properly represents the Laotian people in other ways as well. It may be significant that Thailand, which has been as opposed to communist manoeuvring in Laos as anyone, is now advocating a 'political' solution to the crisis, meaning no military intervention on the part of Seato.

Communist stations and newspapers generally affected to regard the United States' breaking-off of diplomatic relations with Cuba as a prelude to invasion. A Moscow commentary in German said it was significant that 'President-elect Kennedy has in effect dissociated himself from Eisenhower's provocative devices'. Havana radio said that either Eisenhower wanted to greet Kennedy with a war in Cuba or else Kennedy had urged that the Cuban problem be settled before he took over. *The Washington Post* thought the outgoing Administration had tossed Mr. Kennedy a 'hot potato'.

Peking radio, while comparatively restrained in its comment on Laos, said that neither Eisenhower nor Kennedy had made any attempt to conceal their aggressive designs on Africa. The Congo and Algeria alone proved that 'a more acute and bitter battle' was inevitable before Africa would be really free of the imperialists. On the other hand, an article in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* said that the new feature of our time was that most of the sovereign states that emerged in Africa last year gained their independence without an armed struggle.

Moscow, broadcasting to Britain in allegedly 'lighter vein', referred to the possible ban on Russian horses in the Grand National because of African horse disease. An English official was ridiculed as being afraid of 'Red' Trojan horses. The stewards suggested running the race with mules. But the official was adamant. No mules. Well then, asses. 'No asses from other countries', was the reply. To which someone retorted (according to the Soviet commentator): 'Why bring asses into Britain?'

—Based on information collected by the B.B.C. Monitoring Service

STANLEY MAYES

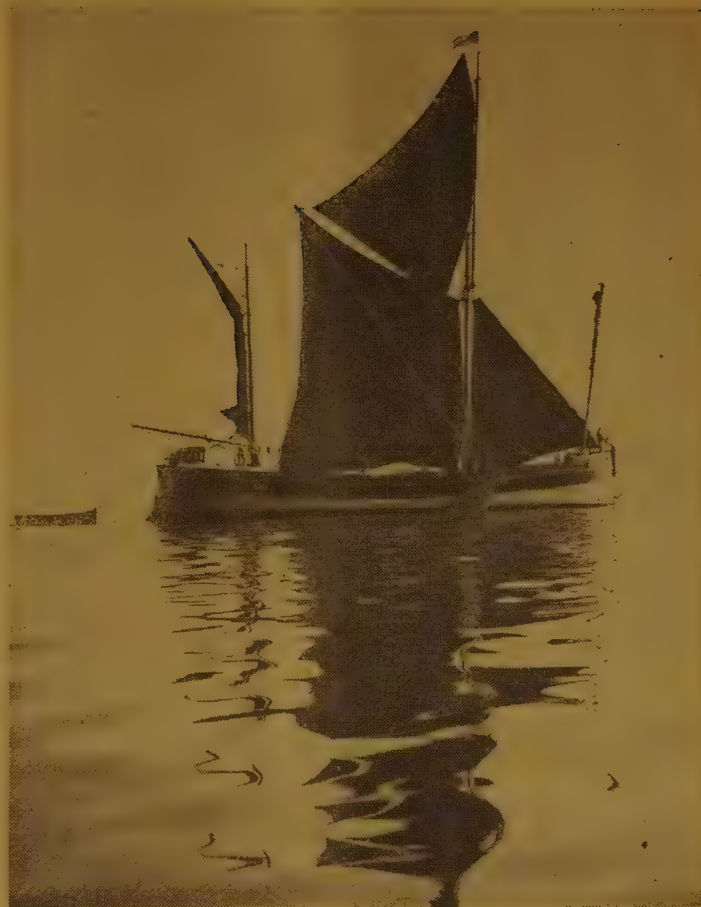
[Mr. Mayes has taken over this column from Derrick Singleton.]

Did You Hear That?

A GOOD LIFE

'WE STILL DO THINGS the old-fashioned way, same as Nelson used'. The speaker was BOB ROBERTS, skipper of the 'Cambria'—the last of the Thames sailing barges to have a spread of red sail and no engine, and he was talking to General Overseas Service listeners in 'The Onlooker'. 'We carry anything in the barge', he said, 'corn, sugar, coal, cement, anything we can pick up; we're really a coastal tramp under sail, we've no power at all. We trade as far north as the Humber, we go up the Humber and then up the Trent, load coal sometimes there—pretty frequently for Margate gasworks. When we come out with the coal we sail on up London river, generally speaking, and load in the Port of London docks and take a cargo away to Yarmouth. I think really we're the only sailing coaster now left in Great Britain. There used to be 8,000 barges altogether with this rig—a sprit-sail rig—but out of that 8,000 there's now seven left.

'Out of those seven, we're the only one that goes on the coast. Our barge carries 170 tons of cargo—she's 91 feet long and she'll set 5,500 feet of canvas, she's got an 80 foot hoist and two of us can manage it—when I say all hands on deck, up comes me mate. I've been about thirty years in this, but I was about five or six years in schooners on the west coast carrying china clay and coal. I started life with an old barquentine, name of "The Water Witch", when she was the last square-rigged British ship, but I was poor you know. I used to get a pound a month and my food, but it was a good life!'



The Thames sailing barge 'Cambria'

STILTON CHEESE

'How is it', asked Mrs. ANNE MORRIS in 'Signpost' (Midland Home Service), 'that Stilton cheese, which is as closely connected with Leicestershire as Melton Mowbray Pie, should come to be called by the name of a village in Huntingdonshire?'

'Well, Stilton cheese was first made at Quenby Hall in Leicestershire during the early eighteenth century. The housekeeper who made it called it "Lady Beaumont's cheese", though whether that was because a certain Lady Beaumont had invented the recipe or simply that she was particularly fond of it, is uncertain. Anyway, it was the housekeeper who made it, and when she married and went to live at Little Dalby, she took the recipe with her and began to make what she called "Quenby cheese".'

'In addition to producing cheese, the once-housekeeper produced two daughters, one of whom eventually married a Mr.

Paulet, who farmed at Wymondham; and the other a Mr. Thornhill who kept the Bell Inn at Stilton in Huntingdonshire, a coach-stage on the Great North Road. Mrs. Paulet inherited her mother's talent for cheese-making, and one day decided to send one of her Quenby cheeses to her brother-in-law as a present. Apparently Mr. Thornhill was so pleased with his present that he decided to try it on some of the travellers who called at the Bell Inn during their journey along the Great North Road. It was such a success that he immediately sent a message to Mrs. Paulet saying that he could use all the Quenby cheese she could make.

'The fame of the rich, blue-veined cheese soon spread. It became closely connected, in the minds of hungry travellers, with the stage at Stilton, which is why the name of "Quenby" disappeared, and the Leicestershire cheese came to be called Stilton'.

OUR BUS

'The most satisfactory way of approaching our dale', said CHRIS CLARKE in 'The North-countryman' (North of England Home Service), 'is by our very local bus. You will get more than mere transport; your fare entitles you to entertainment and/or instruction, a fact which makes our bus service the best value for money of any in the country.

'At the scheduled hour Joe, the driver, appears and begins his duties—which do not start with driving. His first job is to round up his passengers, who may or may not be present. "Whar's Mrs. Kyte? Whar's Cotty lass? Hasn't aad Maggie cum out o' t'café yet?" These questions must be answered to his satisfaction



The Bell Inn at Stilton, Huntingdonshire

before he sets off, and even then a shout from across the market place will stop him while a belated passenger rushes up. If this is your first visit to the dale you should aim for a seat next to Joe, who combines with his duties as driver those of guide, philosopher, and friend. Not only will he set you down as near as the road comes to any house or person you care to mention, but he will also supply as much local information as you need to help you when you get there.

'In the front of the bus is a pile of packages, for this is how many items are delivered up the dale. On Joe's instructions you



A view in Bath (c. 1840) showing part of the navigational system that included the Kennet and Avon Canal
By courtesy of the Parker Gallery

put them out at strategic points along the route. There is no apparent reason for the next stop, but Joe's sharp eyes have spotted a figure streaking across a distant field as though pursued by a bull. Joe sticks his head out of the window. "Dosta want t'bus, lass?" he yells. The figure slows up gratefully, but Joe isn't having that. "Or dussn't ta?" he adds maliciously, causing a fresh spurt and the arrival on board of a very breathless lady a moment later.

'One by one the passengers get out, until it seems that for your benefit alone the bus is grinding on into the heart of the Pennines, as Joe wrestles with narrow twisting roads, steep hills, and bridges built in the days of pack-horses. The dale gets wilder, and you wonder whether the inhabitants are wild to match. Your worst fears are realized as Joe pulls deliberately to a halt and seizes a gun which is stowed within easy reach. In a flash you realize why the bus is empty—Wells Fargo is better on television than in real life. A shot rings out, but there is no answering fusillade from the hillside, and a few moments later Joe is back with a rabbit'.

THE KENNET AND AVON CANAL

'As early as Stuart times', said JOHN CANNON in 'Far and Wide' (West of England Home Service), 'people had talked of an inland water connexion between London and the West Country, but not until 1788 were definite proposals drawn up, when a public meeting, held at Marlborough, decided to promote what they called a Western Canal. Even then, nothing much was done about it—apart from some preliminary surveys—until the great canal mania of 1792: a meeting at Bristol, held in the Guildhall in November, decided to promote a canal to Gloucester and perhaps on to Worcester—they were always grandiosely vague. People were trampled on in the rush to invest, and more than £200,000—the equivalent of several millions today—was subscribed on the spot. The Kennet and Avon Company which, up to then, had

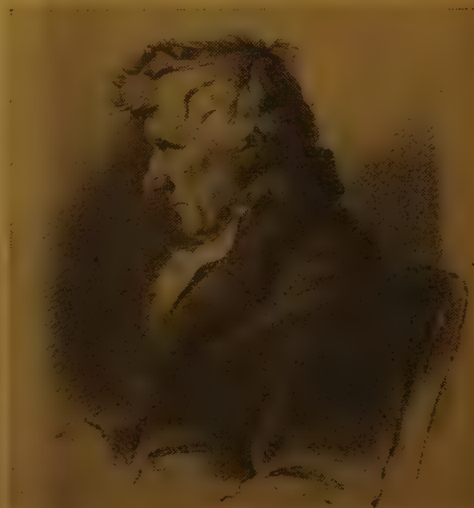
found it difficult to raise funds at all, was jerked into life, and set about building their canal in earnest. Their engineer was a young Scotsman, John Rennie, later to become famous as the builder of Old Waterloo Bridge, London Bridge, and the massive breakwater at Plymouth. The original plan had been to drive the canal from Newbury, through Marlborough and Calne, to Chippenham, along the line of the Bath Road, but on second thoughts it was decided to take it through Savernake Forest to Pewsey, and on through Devizes. Construction began in 1796, and a slow job it was with no mechanical aids and only the brawn of the "inland navigators"

or navvies to rely on. Fifty-seven miles had to be cut, with no fewer than seventy-nine locks. The summit was at Savernake, more than 400 feet above the level at Bath: Rennie made a deep cutting, and then took the canal through a 500-yard tunnel. Near Bradford-on-Avon, limestone rock outcropped and had to be blasted away, while in the Limpley Stoke valley the heavy clay soil began to slip when there was prolonged rain, and had to be shored up and drained. The section from Newbury to Hungerford was open by 1798, and on to Great Bedwyn the following year.

'But the greatest problem of all was at Devizes, where the canal ran down from the uplands into the Avon Valley, and a staircase of twenty-nine locks, within two and a half miles, had to be constructed. The section through Bradford and Bath was opened in 1804, and in 1810 the canal was completed at a cost of £900,000—more than twice the original estimate. Rennie was paid £350 for his work—which he considered far from generous.

'For some thirty years the Kennet and Avon canal was a comparative success, carrying coal from the Somerset and Bristol coalfields, stone for building from Bath, and a good deal of iron, copper, timber, and slates, as well as corn. There were also some efforts to run passenger services. But in the eighteen-forties came the railways. For a few years, while they were being built, they were a boon to the canals, which carried a large part of the materials needed, but as soon as they were established, the competition became irresistible. The canal's fortunes continued to sink. In 1852 the owners gave up the unequal struggle and sold out to the Great Western for a mere £210,000. By the turn of the twentieth century, traffic had fallen to a trickle, and maintenance costs far exceeded income.

'Nevertheless, unlike so many of its neighbours and one-time rivals, the canal has not yet been abandoned. Up to the middle of 1950 it was still navigable throughout. The Kennet and Avon runs through some of the finest scenery in the West Country, the rolling downlands east of Devizes, and the deep, well-wooded Avon Valley from Bradford to Bath'.



John Rennie (1761-1821), engineer of the Kennet and Avon canal

The Function of Dramatic Criticism

JOHN FERNALD gives the last of three talks*

DRAMATIC criticism today is subject to many charges of unfairness—lack of objectivity and irresponsibility and the like; that is, if we are to believe those people who have most cause to resent it, the writers and the artists of the theatre. It is often said that we can do without the critics since they seldom present the real truth about a production and owe their position to no particular qualifications; so that it is impossible to discover among them a common standard of taste, which can give validity to their judgments.

But in complaining of the critics like this, we—producers, actors, authors—are surely ourselves unfair. When was there a critic worth reading who was objective? It is only a strong personal view which gives him a following. Inevitably, then, the world of criticism bristles with prejudice, with unfair statements, with judgments which, whether they are true or false, are cruel beyond anything which the mere reader can possibly imagine. So many people are involved in any stage production, so many artists are vulnerable to critical comment, so many livelihoods are at stake, so many hopes and fears are centred on a reasonable run, that it might be said that fair dramatic criticism is impossible, since it must involve so much that is personal both in the critic and the criticized.

Yet to dispense with the critics, as far as the theatre is concerned, would do it no good. It is too easy for writers and performers to become complacent; too easy, without the stimulus of opposition, for the edge of self-criticism to become blunted.

Information Service for the Public

What about the public's point of view? Do they need critics? I think they do, and not only to provide themselves with an information service. They need the critic because they can use him to measure against their own judgment and thus sharpen their own wits. It is not really enough for us to know that we like or dislike a play or a film. We should know why we think as we do. And if we are to think clearly we must place the critic in a proper perspective and see him in his true proportions. We must avoid the temptation to choose our critic and then to follow his judgments blindly. There is a real danger here, because it is so much easier in the modern world to accept things than to question them; so it may well be easy for us to take our chosen critic too seriously and, in doing that, to assume him to have a knowledge which he cannot possibly possess.

Consider the nature of that composite thing, a theatrical performance say of a play such as Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Its first element is the written play, carefully evolved by someone skilled in a very particular technique. Shaw presents to his audience not only action but several layers of psychic awareness in his characters: not only that, but he presents a wide variety of personal idiosyncrasies in his people: not only that, but he provokes laughter and tears, and tells a story which one desperately wants to see through to the end. And this he has to do by means—and here is the point—of only what people say: no description, no explanation, no reported speech, just what people say. This demands a degree of skill which can be appreciated by no one who has never tried to do it. If popular legend is to be believed, every critic has the rejected manuscript of at least one play in his bottom drawer; so we may perhaps expect him to appreciate the problems of writing a play.

But there is an obvious yet odd thing about a play: it has no real existence until it is performed by actors. What do the actors do with it? They do not only speak the author's lines with intelligence and point and understanding. They do not just apply their art to making their audience laugh or cry or get excited. Their job, with the help of their producer, is to give the play its very life; and they do this not only by assimilating all the information the author or producer can give them about the people they are playing: they do it, also, by creating in terms of differences of

tone and tempo, differences of movement and gesture and nuances of thought and feeling, of astonishing subtlety and variety, a pattern of contrasted effects which transforms the one-dimensional, unrealized script into the three-dimensional living stuff of theatre. How can critics be expected to know about this—in the way that Michael Ayrton 'knows' about Picasso, or Antony Hopkins 'knows' about Bartók, since they have never studied the technique of how the pattern is created?

Varying Components in a Performance

Critics' difficulties do not stop there, however. The art critic and the literary critic are given a clearly defined and unchanging object to criticize. A poem speaks from the page, a picture from the canvas; and whatever it was yesterday it will still be tomorrow. But the dramatic critic is faced with something which flows before him once only, and in which the different components may vary considerably in their importance at different times. How much can dramatic critics know about this? How can they know whether the greater responsibility for a good effect in a performance has been that of the author, the actor, the producer or their own subjective feelings when they happen to fall in love with a personality, as they have been known to do? Actors think critics should know all about the complexities of their own calling; designers think they should know all about the visual arts; and in the cinema, film directors want their critics to understand all about camera angles, and film editors think they should know all about cutting, and so forth.

In Russia, where they think everything is possible, dramatic critics are actually trained at school before they are allowed to work at all, and there they study such things as the lines of the Parthenon, the music of Mozart, the history of drama, ballet, painting, and a substantial chunk of Western literature. But will this make them better critics of the Moscow theatre, better than our critics who have not had these advantages? In theory it should, perhaps. Yet in practice I am not so sure. I do not believe you can teach dramatic criticism any more than you can teach acting. But the born actor has at least the traditional rules of the theatre to turn to in perfecting his techniques—rules which have been discovered empirically by generations of other actors; whereas the critic must either formulate his own rules or work without any.

The Imagined Ideal

On what, in fact, does the critic sit in judgment? When Hazlitt in his analysis of Edmund Kean's playing of Lear berated the actor for the way he spoke to Regan in Act II, did he really criticize his performance or was he in fact criticizing Kean for falling short of an ideal performance which existed only in Hazlitt's own imagination? Although the critic may well have been right in this case, for Kean does seem to have done some odd things with the part, it is in fact fairly inevitable, in dealing with a classic, that a critic's preconceived notions of interpretation have a good deal to do with the opinions he expresses. In which case, what are his opinions worth? In the case of Hazlitt they were worth a good deal because Hazlitt's observations were both logical and theatrically perceptive, and his words in the *London Magazine* add up to two vivid descriptions: one of how Kean actually played the part, and one of how he might have played it if, by some sleight of telepathy, he had followed the promptings of Hazlitt's own imagination.

But there are preconceived notions and preconceived notions. It is one thing for a critic to imagine an ideal performance of a play, and to blame the performer when he falls short of that ideal. It is another to have preconceived notions of character which spring entirely from the critic's own imagination and cannot be

* 'Literary Criticism', by Richard Hoggart, was published in THE LISTENER of December 29; 'Music Criticism', by Alec Robertson, last week

attributed to any sources from the play itself. This can happen. What, for instance, are we to make of the following statement concerning a performance in Ibsen's *Ghosts*?

However sorry we may be for Mrs. Alving we must surely recoil from her in horror. A life of domestic misery and deceit has twisted her into something of a monster. But [the actress] was altogether too human for a part that calls for cold steel. She showed us a pathetic husk of an unhappy woman and only touched our sympathy in the last terrible ten seconds of the play.

It will be clear to those who know Ibsen's play that the writer of this has decided for himself that Mrs. Alving is something of a monster. There is not a shred of evidence in the play itself or in anything that Ibsen wrote about the play, to suggest this. Yet the actress playing Mrs. Alving is adversely criticized for not being a monster. The reasonably knowledgeable reader is therefore left to wonder what the writer's reasons could have been for inventing such a strangely false characterization. As for the unknowledgeable reader, and there are many of him, he must surely have taken the writer's words at their face value and concluded that an inadequate performance of Mrs. Alving had happened, which is hard indeed on the actress who played her; and hard, too, on the reader who takes the critic as an oracle.

Responsibility to an Audience

How many critics in fact realize their responsibility to their audience? How many of them have decided what audience they are talking to? The regular theatre-goer who has built up for himself a fair background of dramatic history and fashions will, of course, be able to read between the lines according to the record the critic has shown in the past; though even then it is easy for a critic's words to mean far more than he intended. Take, for instance, the following statement recently made about a play which, whatever its merits or demerits, was taken quite seriously by all the critics. After a very fair account of the story of the piece, in which the critic did not fully believe, came the following words:

Another reason for my incredulity may be the fact that no male playwright can know how two women converse when nobody else is present.

Does this mean that this writer thinks that the end of Act II of *Uncle Vanya* cannot be true, and similarly the opening of *John Gabriel Borkman*, to say nothing of what goes on between Celia and Rosalind in the scenes they have together in *As You Like It*? Of course it means no such thing: it means no more than that the writer found a sentence which seemed to express neatly a disbelief he felt about a particular play, and so he wrote it without thinking out all its implications. Yet from the same pen has come many a brilliant analysis, many a memorably apt critical appraisal, so that probably this particular writer is more respected, more believed in by theatre people, than any critic has been within the last three decades.

Consistent objectivity in a critic is indeed difficult to find. Perhaps we should rid ourselves of the idea that objectivity is indeed possible. I have a feeling that it is something which can really never be except in the artist's own mind. Those of us who work in the theatre, the subjects, the victims often, of criticism, evoke for themselves an ideal critic, because we need to have our work loved and understood by someone; and we imagine a critical father-figure who understands and loves everything we do and whose criticisms, in the words of Anatole France, are 'adventures of the soul among masterpieces'. We think the good objective critic is the one who is good to us—and objective about everybody else.

I think that objectivity is not only impossible; it is not even desirable. To experience theatre should be to experience a kind of magic; and though creating the magic depends as much on logic as it does on inspiration, there is often no room for logic in the receptive apparatus of the audience. The magic is evoked by many things, by speech and action, by signs and images, creatively orchestrated by a producer. But the magic is sustained by a mysterious empathy as each member of the audience receives a tiny particle of the magic current, amplifies it as he falls under its spell, and passes it on to his neighbour. Actors can tell us how important to them this current is, and how audiences vary from night to night according to their conductivity. But—and this is

important—the conductivity depends not so much on whether most of them like the play or not: it depends much more on whether most of them are prepared to accept the terms on which it seeks to have its theatrical life; that is, on whether they are willing to enter into the special world which it tries to create round it.

The ordinary intelligent theatre-goer has no difficulty about this, provided the author and his interpreters have done their work well enough. But the professional theatre-goer, the theatrical journalist, who might be expected to prepare his readers to accept those terms, all too often does find it difficult: largely, I suspect, because of the conditions of his trade.

A Change in Criticism

Dramatic criticism has changed a great deal since Hazlitt's time. The critics of the Hazlitt tradition were private individuals of taste and judgment with well-stocked minds into which, by their literary skill, they granted their readers the privilege of a peep. The reader, more sophisticated than the average newspaper reader of today, soon learnt to know the critic's foibles, and, in the light of that knowledge, he could form his own conclusions if he wished. Some of the critics of today are very different. The leisurely essay in which actors are described and compared has given way often to a few paragraphs written in a hurry to ensure inclusion in the earliest edition, and written for people who are themselves in too much of a hurry to consider. Of Sunday notices, weekly notices, this is less true, where the critic himself has time to consider what he is writing. Yet most notices today seem to me to suffer from the malaise of our age—the psychology receptive to suggestion, gimmicks, snap judgments and clever verbal acrobatics (which do not mean very much when examined, but which are in no danger of being ever exposed for what they are because no one has any time to examine them). Many people today seem to crave for more gimmicks, more brilliance, more shock tactics of all kinds to distract them from the very real fears which fill their subconscious about the future of mankind. And it is not only the cheaper newspapers which cater for this craving. Many journalists seem to think it their duty to provide for it, and in their search for a convenient excuse for 'brilliance', the theatre comes in handy. But the aura surrounding a journalist hungering for an 'angle' which will make his notice snappy reading, is not a great help towards the relaxed flow of that magic current of which I spoke.

In the serious newspapers, the tradition of reasoned, moderate, personalized writing still persists, however shakily; but the popular press by its very nature is encouraging its theatrical journalists to do something entirely different. The 'popular' critics are not private individuals. They are granted by their editors the status of oracles and they write as such. They are becoming public personalities—they appear on the television screen and editors often print their photographs alongside their notices. Yet, despite this emphasis on personality, what these writers are required to present seems to be a sort of synthetic, standardized, snappy journalistic mask.

A Notice in a Serious Newspaper—

Let us compare two notices of the same play. The first from one of the more serious newspapers began like this:

Last night at the Duke of York's there was loud and well-deserved applause for Beverley Cross's strong play about the Merchant Navy, *One More River*.

As so often happens when an author brings knowledge and insight to the treatment of a theme concerning men in tense action, the atmosphere is perfectly conveyed and the team-work of the cast notably excellent.

We find the ship at anchor in a West African river, awaiting the chance of a berth in a nearby port. Her captain has died, and the mate, Sewell, is in charge.

The crew is in a mutinous mood because he is slave-driving them in torrid heat to have the ship preternaturally clean and so impress the owners with his fitness for command.

The centre of Mr. Cross's interest is the bosun, Condell, an old seaman who considers himself the equal of any officer, and reserves his most withering scorn for the young apprentice Ross, a training-ship product with no rough experience behind him.

That was followed by an accurate account of the story of the

play with some assessment of the quality of the writing and the quality of the acting; and, as you see, it gave an impression of 'how the evening went'—how the audience at the first night reacted.

I was at that first night; I was very interested in what this author had done, for he seemed to me to have achieved something rather unusual. He had combined the elements of drama and theatrical excitement with those of a Socratic debate on justice; and he had managed with perfect plausibility to express the combination within the framework of a true to life story in an extremely realistic setting. This is a difficult thing to do, and I am not aware that any modern playwright has ever actually done it. As a rule, the more dramatic the play becomes, and the stronger its story line, the less opportunity there is for the author to examine character with any depth, and even Ibsen in *Hedda Gabler* did not succeed in forcing a convincing marriage of convenience between melodrama and social comment. But I thought that this author did this very thing, and there was no doubt on the first night that the audience agreed with this view, if one could judge by the reception they gave the play at the end. There could be no doubt, we all thought, that however the piece was criticized for any shortcomings that might be found in it, it would at least be criticized as a play with a point of view and something to say worth saying, by an author who had a marked gift for writing for the theatre.

—and in the Popular Press

Now let us see what a critic of the popular press had to write about it:

Mr. Beverley Cross, no doubt impressed by the success of every sea melodrama since *True Blue* seventy odd years ago (in which the heroine is rescued from the boiler just before the order to get up steam is given), might have called his play 'The Caine Mutiny on board H.M.S. "Ulysses", while Mr. Roberts swims through the cruel sea towards treasure island'.

There is a domineering officer on board a cargo steamer and a mutiny rumbling among the crew.

The mutiny explodes, the officer is given a lower deck trial, the bosun takes reluctant command of the ship.

But class tells and the young apprentice officer is in command at the end as the lower orders come gratefully to heel—the only place they know if we are to believe Mr. Cross.

But if we know a play from a sea shanty, we will not. *One More River* is tense enough if we look only at the incidents.

Trick after trick is cleverly turned; its superficial theatricality is undeniable.

But as the incidents become less predictable the attitudes become more so.

Mr. Cross for all his big talk, for all his sweat and swear words, is nothing but a sentimental stage carpenter. He ought to marry Mr. Rattigan's Aunt Edna and have done with it.

The point to note here is not that this journalist did not like the play: not even that he failed to find anything in it of the slightest value and said so. It is the way he has written about it: first, the irrelevant reference back to a melodrama of seventy years ago. Nobody has heard of this melodrama, but its mention serves to give the writer an air of authority and knowledgeability. Second, he exposes the play to ridicule; and ridicule, an equivocal weapon at the best of times, is one which until recently has been sparingly used by critics, for a good reason. If a critic ridicules every play that he considers 'bad' he is giving the impression that there is no difference between one 'bad' play and another 'bad' play: this suggests that there are only two kinds of plays—those which are hopelessly bad and those which are good beyond all praise. The truth is less simple: plays vary in quality and in kind just as much as people do, and ridicule is perhaps best spared for use in recording what is utterly contemptible, instead of for belabouring the promising effort of a young dramatist.

One might feel that the writer of this last notice of *One More River* might have possessed, as a journalist, the sensitive antennae with which at least to note the verdict of the audience, but we have to remember that, as a particular kind of journalist, he had a duty which transcended this. He had a duty to provide provocative writing, and he provided it. Yet he is capable of a different vein. The theatre's magic can cast its spell on him.

But how often is he to be allowed to let that happen? It does

seem as if the freedom to do so, the luxury of writing in a civilized manner, can occur only rarely, otherwise the popular press would lose its character and that, of course, would never do.

Misleading Headlines

I have tried to indicate some of the complex aesthetic problems confronting the dramatic critic in any age; and I have tried to suggest some of the special problems which beset him in our own time, some of the forces which tend to dull his sensitivity to the magic of the theatre—the lack of time for sober reflection, the journalistic fashions, which make him cater for our modern craving for the slick and slashing turn of phrase. And here I should mention something else which comes between reader and critic. This is the practice whereby sub-editors can, and do, provide captions to notices, captions which have never been authorized by the critic himself. A critic may write quite an appreciative notice of an acting performance in which he mentions that two leading players played a certain scene possibly a little too slowly for his taste, but the notice may well appear the next day under the heading 'Slow Playing by Miss X and Mr. Y'. And such a heading, especially to busy people with little time to take in the notice itself, can give the impression that the whole evening was dismal and tedious. The critic himself may not have wished to give that impression in the least. Yet the newspaper employee, who has spent the entire night at a sub-editor's desk, is permitted, in the name of readability, to alter the whole slant of a notice and perhaps seriously affect the play's chances of success.

It is difficult positively to assess just how far notices do affect plays. There are plays running today that were given two weeks' run by the oracles six months ago; but there are others which have almost certainly been killed by bad notices, notices which seem to give every sign of having been hastily thrown together for the sake of popular journalism.

One of the dangers of modern popular criticism is that it is catching. When one newspaper has surpassed itself in snappy writing, other newspapers are likely to try to beat it at its own game. But it is, I think, reasonable to believe that the effect of writing of this kind over the years will be that, with the general public, faith in the value of much criticism will be lost.

Is this necessarily a bad thing? Perhaps not. One of the troubles of the age is the automatic acceptance of many judgments and so-called values without any independent thinking about them: if readers lose faith in the critics, if indeed they lose patience with what may appear to be their ignorance, their capriciousness, their pontificating, and sometimes their cruelty, if readers drop their allegiance to the oracle, will they then read between the lines of notices, form their own judgments, take a calculated risk and go to the theatre or cinema, and find out the truth for themselves? If they really care for the theatre, if they really care for the cinema, I think they may. And if they do, then dramatic criticism will still have served its purpose, even if by rather negative means.

Reasonable Basis for the Critic-Reader Relationship

But I still think that we in the theatre need criticism; so let me suggest a reasonable basis for the critic-reader relationship. Whether a critic 'knows what he is talking about' or not does not seem to me to matter very much. What surely does matter is that he should be himself on paper. If he is himself, if he conveys a reasonably receptive, interested, and individual personality to the reader, then the reader can gather from his reactions whether a play or a film sounds compelling enough for him to risk the price of a pair of tickets on it. And if he can retain a consistent personality despite the demands of journalistic fashion, if he can avoid capricious judgments by the repeated assertion of a continuous ideal for the theatre, if his purpose is really to improve the quality of our theatre, he will then retain his reader's regard.—*Network Three*

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We extend our congratulations to the editors of *History Today* which has just published its tenth anniversary number (price 3s.).

Painting of the Month

Holbein's 'The Ambassadors'

By DAVID PIPER

TO begin with, I am not going to take you to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, but rather further afield, both in space and time. In time, to be precise, 427 years ago: January 1534, and the paint is not yet hard on Holbein's painting known as 'The Ambassadors'; he finished it perhaps less than six months ago, when the two men it portrays were in London on a diplomatic mission from France.

We have come then to a castle, a towery castle, a château called Polisy, in the north-east of France, where Burgundy borders on Champagne. It is a rich and abundant country in summer, but cold in winter, colder than in England, and the cold clings to the stone of the staircase. You are climbing up from the ground floor to the first, looking for the owner; maybe he is out, maybe everyone is out, and the only sound is your own footsteps on the stairs. You pass a window that floods the spiral with light, and then mount into semi-darkness again. Then, looking up, above you on your left, you see a shimmer of green streaked with black and red and white, and there is something in the middle of that blur. It is not yet clear, just something yellowish; it is almost as if it were trying to take shape in your eyes; you take a step on up, and you stop. The shape in the rich blur of colour above has almost hardened, and a skull hovers from the wall above you. Luminous, almost phosphorescent, almost hung out from the wall like an inn-sign, only not saying welcome: a challenge, rather. But if you answer it, going on up, it dissolves in your eyes; you press on, you glance away for a second—you have reached a landing in the stairs and have to look where you are going—and when you look for the skull again, it is gone. Instead, there, almost on your own level, hangs a painting of the owner of the house, as large as life and as natural, leaning on a sort of two-tiered table that is piled with globes, musical instruments, geometrical instruments, books. At the far end of the table, leaning on it too, there is a friend of the owner.

Vivid as Birds

The two men are lit by the sunlight falling from a window behind your right shoulder, and they are as vivid as birds in mating plumage, against the rich green damask curtain that falls in folds behind them. The man on your left is the most striking, in a terrific luxury of clothes: basically in the most sumptuous of blacks—black hose, undercoat, and jaunty black cap, but his doublet shining pink satin, his surcoat flung back to show its lining of ermine like a foam; round his neck there is a gold chain bearing the gold medallion of the Order of St. Michael; his dagger is gold and his sword hilt, and from the sling of the dagger hangs a vast tassel of gold and green. He is a very great man on earth, Jean de Dinteville by name, head of one of the most ancient and aristocratic families of France, and he presents in himself a most potent image of worldly pomp and power.

Much more subdued is his friend on your right, standing straight and almost sombre, his dark robe closed about his body. He, like the other one, is also a diplomat, but a priest as well: Georges de Selve, Bishop of Lavour. But though his pose is grave, austere, there is little of the ascetic about him; his gown is of a noble reddish brown damask lined with a rich brown fur. And then, between the sensual and physical pride of these two figures, there is the strange, crisp, almost clinical display of instruments on the table between them, all instruments for the exercise of intellect and spirit: for astronomy, arithmetic, geometry; for theology and astrology; for music. The two men are young, Dinteville twenty-nine and the Bishop only twenty-five—their ages are marked on the picture—and they stand there in the splendour of their youth as though they had been selected for show as the most complete and fortunate of men; two human beings blessed with the capacity and the opportunity to extract out of life everything that it can yield. Everything of the highest order that

life can yield—here there is no wine, no women, and the songs you can read in the open book are versions of the Ten Commandments and of that most triumphant of Christian hymns, *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

The Skull and the Breathing Image

Only—where has the skull gone? that skull that you glimpsed a moment ago from an oblique angle below on the stairs; which should be exactly where this lifelike, almost breathing image of the two men hangs on the wall of the landing. In fact you can see now what must be it, though as you stand square in front of the picture it has become only a meaningless streak—incoherent yet somehow sinister, like a man-eating shape refracted through depth of water. This shape sprawls diagonally, low across the foreground of the picture, and though you know what it must be, however hard you stare you cannot make it cohere with your eyes alone from where you stand. And it breaks up the monumental stillness of the painting; it does not belong there; it seems suspended between you and the two men. If you look at the faces of the men for a clue, you will not get much of an answer, though their eyes may seem a little oppressive by now—they will not let you alone. The Bishop's gaze is a little dull, opaque; Dinteville's face has a glint, an open alertness in the eyes, but the hint on the curve of the lips might be of mockery. You can look as long as you like but you will find no more open clue than that. Except, before you turn to go on up the stairs, you may spot two details you could easily miss. In the extreme top-left corner of the painting, half-hidden in the folds of the green curtain, a little cross bearing the crucified body of Christ, a crucifix. And then—and you have to look very close to find this—in the little gold badge on Dinteville's black cap, you can just make out—again—the image of a skull: like the faintest echo of the shape sprawled across the foreground, played down until it is almost unnoticeable.

And you go on up, and with you goes the echo of your steps; as you follow the curve of the steps you may doubt what you have seen. You look back, down towards the landing in its patch of light. The two men have vanished, and from the shimmering blur of the picture surface there hovers again that gleaming skull. But as you move, the skull decomposes again, and vanishes; and you go on up.

A Picture to See from Below

In the National Gallery, the seat in front of Holbein's painting of the two Ambassadors is padded and agreeably comfortable; the air is conditioned and laps you warmly with a gentle hum. The painting hangs there, one among other paintings; it is, of course, a magnificent piece of work, so skilful, so solid seeming, the two men with the strange still-life between them. And in this nuclear age, the instruments seem almost quaint in their remoteness, like Victorian bric-à-brac. There is of course that distorted skull still there, in the foreground, so strange, so curious, so clever—but perhaps really a bit too clever, spoiling the composition. In fact you may feel that I have overdone the picture, presenting it in the way I have just done. I cannot even guarantee that it was meant for exactly the setting I described, though something similar seems to be the only way to answer the logical demands of the picture—it should be seen from below and from above at a very oblique angle, and also from in front, very close to and not much above eye-level. It is interesting, though perhaps only a coincidence, that in May 1532—a year before this picture was painted—Dinteville was writing home about a new tower and some pictures that he was adding to his castle. It should perhaps have a dark tower all to itself—it would be worth it, for it is not simply a trick picture, a brilliant essay in deceiving the eye by the sleight of an admittedly extraordinarily skilled hand.

Let me start with the frontal view. For a portrait there is no exact parallel in its composition at this date. It has a heraldic quality that has often been commented on, I am sure rightly. In their panoply of furs and silks, the two men stand there like the two figures called, in heraldry, the supporters, on each side of a shield of arms. On a small scale Holbein had done many similar straight heraldic designs before—for translucent coats of arms in stained glass to hang in a window. In 'The Ambassadors' there is no shield with its emblems of lineage, but instead this shop-window display of all the instruments of intellectual and spiritual accomplishment. It is almost as if these two great feudal aristocrats wished to demonstrate that aristocracy of birth and blood is not enough; aristocracy of mind and spirit is equally or even more important.

But also the composition of the two standing figures may suggest something quite other; one can read this composition as though it were a translation into secular terms of a classic religious formula of the Italian High Renaissance: that of the Virgin and Child with her saints standing on either side of her. But here the focus is not the Virgin but all those instruments that suggest the New Learning, even the Reformed Religion (the hymns are in German, in Luther's versions). You get echoes of this sort of 'secularization' of religious themes elsewhere in Holbein: in his masterpiece of his wife and children, for example, at Basle, posed like a Virgin and Child with the Infant St. John the Baptist, but with his wife painted ruthlessly, all woman, and a woman of sorrows at that, innocent of divinity, an intimation of mortality. Holbein himself was a citizen of Basle, a fiercely Protestant city, and the year that he painted this picture in London, 1533, Henry VIII broke finally with the Church of Rome; but this cannot be pressed very far and is one of several enigmas about 'The Ambassadors' still to be solved, for as far as is known, both the characters who sat for this painting were staunch and orthodox Catholics. And it is the heraldic precision and symmetry of the picture that is its dominant quality—dominant, that is, until you come to the distorted skull.

But even there, in the skull, Holbein is re-stating a heraldic theme that he had used as frontispiece for one of his most famous works: the frontispiece to his engravings of the Dance of Death. This too was a shield of arms, with a supporter on each side, a man and a woman in the prime of their flesh; but on the shield itself, instead of the usual emblems of life rooted in the past and continuing now, there is simply a skull, and the crest is an hour-glass. A theme normally used to emphasize the continuity of life has been turned inside out to show the exact opposite.

So too in 'The Ambassadors'. But whereas in the Dance of Death engraving the composition is perfectly orthodox in construction at least, in 'The Ambassadors' the skull utterly disrupts the orthodox rules of composing a picture. This has often been held against it, but I believe wrongly. 'The Ambassadors' works perfectly well as a unity, and the critics who have objected to the

skull as to a misplaced ingenuity have missed the point. For this, unlike most—indeed I think all—other single great Renaissance pictures, is not meant to be seen from one viewpoint. It is a picture in three movements, or in three acts, to see which—as in certain forms of medieval drama—the spectator and not the scenery has to move. First you see, from an oblique angle, the skull; you move forward and the skull vanishes as though it were the opening wing of a triptych to leave the central panel clear, the second act; you move on and up, and the picture is closed again with the skull.

Of course, this is also trickery; but it is much more than that. The point it makes is that the whole thing is trickery anyway; that all Renaissance painting is a trick. A basic revolution in Renaissance painting was the

rediscovery of the technique of perspective, by which the illusion of a three-dimensional world could be sustained on a two-dimensional surface in a painting. And in fact the illusion of the two diplomats standing clear as life between their almost concrete instruments of learning and of art is achieved by a masterly display of the technique. But so too is the skull that seems to disrupt them: it is drawn equally strictly according to the rules of a sort of inverted or perverted perspective.

To put it another way, in spite of and because of the excellences of perspective, you cannot possibly see all the picture at once. Perspective, the pride of Renaissance artists from Van Eyck to Alberti and Leonardo, the perspective codified for northern Europe by Holbein's German



'The Ambassadors', by Hans Holbein the Younger: in the National Gallery, London

forebear of the previous generation, Dürer—perspective itself is also but a vanity of vanities. Holbein himself—as indeed he shows here—was a major virtuoso of the techniques of perspective, and again and again in his works his delight in its illusionistic possibilities is obvious. Yet he was also, of all northern artists, not excepting Dürer, the closest to the great Italians in his power of absorbing illusionistic detail into the calm and serene, the classic monumentality of the whole—as here in the figures of the two men. And all this he wilfully disrupts with a twisted skull—yet not wilfully, for the whole of this painting, the whole trinity of it, the whole paradox of subject-matter and of technique, forms an exactly calculated and profound statement of the one theme, *vanitas vanitatis*, vanity of vanities. In the midst of death we are in life, which is opened and closed by a skull. Only the crucifix, almost as if deliberately half-hidden in the folds of the curtain, may be construed as a half-hint of a mystery that art cannot begin to encompass: another act yet, when the green curtain will be drawn and both life and death prove to be vanities in a greater order of being known only to the vision of God.

Holbein's own personality is most elusive and opaque, but the evidence of his works is plain: he was much possessed by death, like Webster and like so many artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; yet this is not a morbid picture—it is a wry one, perhaps, but it presents its theme with extraordinary detachment in its ironic paradox, two pictures which are one and yet are

not one. It has no close parallels in painting, although some other trick perspectives of the time exist, but it can be illumined from the literature of the time, most notably Erasmus. In 1509, in Thomas More's house in London—only a little way from where Holbein was later to paint this picture—Erasmus had written one of the great books of the world—*The Praise of Folly*. Holbein of course knew Erasmus well, and in Basle had illustrated a copy of *The Praise of Folly* with pen drawings. In this there are not only passages, when Folly claims as her own even the most accomplished of men—scientists, even theologians, and so on—passages that could almost serve as texts for Holbein's painting,

but there is also a similar ironic detachment and ambiguity on the part of the author.

Much has been written about 'The Ambassadors', but there is still much to find out. Not only details; far more, for example, needs to be discovered about the strange and splendid man, Jean de Dinteville, who commissioned it. Here I have been able to do little more than stress what I take to be its major theme, but the painting itself is there, wide open to your eyes, in the National Gallery. It may begin by baffling, and continue, still baffling, by haunting you; but of one thing I am certain, you will not come to the end of it.—*Home Service*

How Much Sleep do We Need?

By R. T. WILKINSON

ANIMALS, small babies, and the occasional adult, often give the impression of waking up only when they have to; most adult humans, however, seem to be moving towards a policy of sleeping as little as possible. Clearly for each one of us there must be an optimal amount of sleep; less will impair our powers of survival and advancement, more will reduce unnecessarily the time we have to do these things. The question of how much this is becomes increasingly important with the growing potential of our civilization for good or evil.

Yet, despite the importance of this question, it is probably true to say that up to thirty years ago not only could we not answer it, but we could see no research tools which might eventually enable us to do so. But since then there have been important developments which have changed the picture; in particular new forms and techniques of neurophysiological measurement have emerged, and, secondly, experimental psychology has developed better methods of evaluating human performance and behaviour. Studies, for example, of body and eye movements, of sensory thresholds, and, above all, of the electrical potentials of the brain during sleep encourage us to think that we may be able to assess with useful accuracy the depth or quality of sleep. In carefully controlled experiments also the amount of sleep has been varied to find the effects of lack of sleep upon performance and upon physiological changes in the body, especially those which accompany the effort to maintain normal behaviour and working standards in spite of deprivation of sleep.

These and other advances are still at an early stage of development, but the fact that studies of this nature multiply yearly suggests that before long we shall have at our disposal the means to a new and more scientific approach to the question of how much sleep we need. But as we pause on the frontier of this advance it may be salutary to assess the state of our present knowledge of this question, if only to appreciate fully how very little we really know about it at present, and the importance of learning more.

There must be few questions on which responsible opinion is so utterly divided. There are some who think we can leave the body to regulate these matters for itself. 'The answer is easy', says one authority. 'With the right amount of sleep you should wake up fresh and alert five minutes before the alarm rings'. If he is right many people must be undersleeping, including myself. But we must remember that some people have a greater inertia than others. This is not meant rudely; they switch on slowly, but also they are reluctant to switch off; they are alert at bedtime and sleepy when it is time to get up, and this may have nothing to do with how fatigued their bodies are,

or how much sleep they must take to dissipate their fatigue.

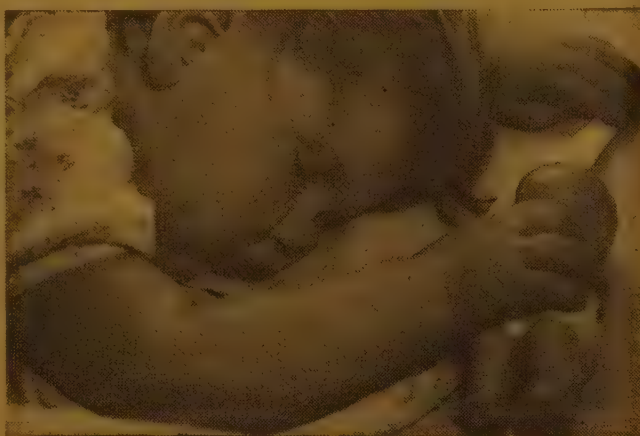
Indeed this may beg a question. From animals we get the impression that it is satiation rather than fatigue which promotes sleep; many of them appear to wake mainly to satisfy their bodily needs; during the rest of the time they return to the negative state of sleep. This may be true for adult humans also, but with the important difference that their needs are often so complex and long-term in nature that they can never be completely satisfied; this may mean that other factors—habit, choice, and fatigue—must enter to play the chief part in deciding how much sleep shall be taken. But habits can change, and choice can be influenced by external pressures in ways which may lead to periods of sleep bearing little relation to the state of fatigue of the body and the real need for rest.

Other people feel sure that the current trend is towards too little sleep. To quote one medical opinion: 'Thousands of people drift through life suffering from the effects of too little sleep; the reason is not that they can't sleep but that they just don't'. One can sympathize with this impression; like advancing colonists, we do seem to be grasping ever more of the land of sleep for our

waking needs, pushing the boundary back and reaching, apparently, for a point in our evolution where we will sleep no more. This in itself, of course, need not be a bad thing; what could be disastrous, however, and what these people fear, is that we should press too quickly towards this goal, sacrificing sleep only to gain more time in which to jeopardize our civilization by actions and decisions made weak by fatigue and neurosis.

Then, to complete the picture, there are those who believe that most people are persuaded to sleep too much. Dr. H. Roberts, writing in *Everyman in Health*, asserts: 'It may safely be affirmed that, just as the majority eat too much, so the majority sleep too much'. One can see the point of this also; it would be a pity to retard our development by holding back those people who are gifted enough to work and play well with less than the average amount of sleep, if indeed it does them no harm. If one of the trends of evolution is that more of the life span is to be spent in gainful waking activity, then surely these people are in the van of this advance; if they can be efficiently active for longer than their fellows, then, in a truly Darwinian sense, they and their children will be more likely to survive. We should not persuade them to sleep more than they do unless we are sure that they need to.

Of course, we are not sure. Not only are we unable to give a formula for individual sleep requirement, we cannot even give confident averages for the different age groups. This is because we have no substantial scientific evidence to draw from, and



Henry Grant



opinions based on clinical evidence present a picture which is too contradictory to be a dependable guide. We have already seen how general statements can differ; a few examples will suffice to show that this applies also to quantitative assessments of the amount of sleep we need. If I go to my local public library for information, this is what I find: Stedman's *Medical Dictionary* gives an average of eight hours for men and nine for women. From the *Family Doctor* come these statements: 'Men and women rank equally in sleep need. Most of us are content with seven hours or less'. And elsewhere: 'Most folk need between seven and eight hours'. The *Good Housekeeping Encyclopaedia of Family Health* advises the conventional round figure of eight hours.

Confidence in the value of clinical assessment is further shaken when we turn to the one field which is well documented scientifically: the sleep needed by the very young. Babies in the first few weeks of life appear to wake only to satisfy their basic needs of food, warmth, and evacuation; here it may be reasonable to take the observed amount of sleep as a true index of the sleep required. For many years an official American publication on infant care advised that the week-old child should sleep for twenty to twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four; by six months this should reduce to about sixteen hours. Now three studies have been made of the actual hours slept by children in the first six months of life and all return a figure less than this; the last, a particularly thorough examination in 1953, showed that a group of infants in their third week averaged only about fifteen hours' sleep a day, and that by six months this figure had fallen to about fourteen. In spite of this research the earlier idea still persisted. Would similar assessments of adult sleep requirements fare any better if we had scientific evidence against which to check them?

Let us see what evidence there is, first, on how much sleep we actually take. This appears to rise with age up to twenty in this way: thirteen hours at 2 years, eleven and a half at 5, just under ten hours at 10 years and about eight and a half hours between the ages of 15 and 20. These are averages and individuals may exceed or fall below them by as much as two hours. Beyond 20 years we know little.

But sleep actually taken by adults may not represent their real needs. What do we know of these? If a general sense of well-being is any guide to adequate sleep a relevant experiment is one in America where college students were asked to rate 'how good they felt' and then say how much sleep they had the night before. The happiest group were not the average people taking about seven point three hours' sleep but those with over eight hours, followed by those with more than nine; those sleeping less than six hours were the most miserable. This suggests that most people undersleep; but it may just be that unhappy people are the type to sleep less; there need be no causal relation.

A novel approach has been to examine the sleep of men in the Arctic, where for half the year there is either continuous daylight or continuous darkness. Thus removed from the pressures of normal life and the discipline of the twenty-four-hour cycle of day and night, these men, when allowed to sleep freely, still averaged, again with wide individual variation, just under eight hours' sleep a day. But now the sleep was taken in a series of

distributed spells, rather like that of animals such as the cat, whose night vision makes it independent of light and darkness. This may suggest that we also might benefit from breaking up our daily sleep, for has not artificial light made us less dependent on the same diurnal cycle of light and darkness? Perhaps, in the first instance, we might take an afternoon nap at the expense of a shorter period at night.

Indirect evidence on the amount of sleep we need comes from studies of what happens when we do without it. At first sight these suggest that we do not need as much as we take. It has been difficult to show any effect on performance of as little as one night's loss of sleep, and even after three days awake we can expect normal efficiency in a man taking responsible decisions in a job which he finds really absorbing and exciting. Furthermore, when at last he is allowed to sleep he will probably wake after some twelve hours and show little, if any, ill-effect. These laboratory observations are borne out by examples in everyday life. The recent spate of marathon walks, chess contests, darts matches and dancing tournaments show how people can maintain physical effort with very little sleep over periods of more than a week.

It seems clear that the human body is equipped to override the need for sleep in order to meet emergencies of quite long duration with faculties unimpaired. But this reversibility of the effect of loss of sleep in face of urgent and absorbing demands may be the greatest source of danger. People may think they are more efficient than they really are. I remember talking to a man who was playing a vital and interesting part in a rather difficult and prolonged exercise: his opportunities for sleep over five days were few and he said, 'When I find myself making a silly mistake I know it is time to knock off for a little sleep'. But, of course, this is too late. We cannot afford to have key men await the warning of mistakes before they take rest; too much depends on their decisions these days.

Again, there is some suggestion that maintaining normal performance in spite of insufficient sleep may cost the body more in terms of effort. Could such a drain of resources accumulate over perhaps months of undersleeping and culminate in a sudden breakdown with irrevocable errors in judgment? These are questions to which research to date has given no answer; understandably, for we cannot expect answers to come easily without considerable research effort. The effect of partial or complete loss of sleep, for example, cannot be assessed by a half-hour test on one man. A sufficiently large sample of subjects must be doing what approaches closely to a normal day's work. And as with heat studies we need to 'acclimatize' the subject to the experimental situation, to the lack of sleep itself, and to the tests themselves if they differ from normal work. In other words the experiment should be spread over periods of months not days. No experimental studies so far have met all these requirements, probably because they demand more resources than space-conscious communities will provide for a problem as mundane as the optimum ratio of rest and activity in humans.

Yet, without such research, one day we may find ourselves with too few clear heads to control the forces of destruction we have contrived; one day a space traveller may return to find the earth an empty place.—*European Services*



Jane Burton

Splendours and Mysteries of Sumer

By C. J. GADD

THE Sumerians are decidedly the mystery-men of early antiquity. They appear to us as the first identifiable population of southern Iraq, but what identifies them is solely their language. Neither physical type, manner of life, beliefs nor artefacts, however carefully scrutinized, can afford a really acceptable difference between Sumerian and Semite or between Sumerian and some possible foregoers. Were the Sumerians immigrants—if so, whence coming? To what race related? How far did Sumerian nationality extend? What were their contacts with the supposed supplanting Semites? All kinds of answers have been attempted to these and the like fundamental problems, and to none have satisfying solutions been found. This is a strange want of definition concerning a people about whom we nevertheless know much as concerns their cultural achievements, for the Sumerians were certainly notable pioneers in ideas, civilization, and literature, which have kept their place ever since in the worlds both of the Nearer East and of Europe.

These unsettled questions have their full counterpart in the art of ancient Babylonia, which is the material of a sumptuous book of French origin now appearing as the first volume in a series 'The Arts of Mankind'. By its title it is dedicated to the art of Sumer—but what is that? How far back and how far forward are we to delimit Sumerian art? How account for the products of this art in places almost surely not of Sumerian population? Why were some of its finest specimens made by peoples specifically non-Sumerian? Can we unfeignedly call Sumerian even the high time of the Royal Graves at Ur, when 'Shub-ad' herself, the very hierophant of Sumerian art, has now been fitted with a Semitic name? All this merely emphasizes what was said at the beginning—nothing is truly distinctive about the Sumerians except their language, and even that sometimes takes on an ambiguous cast, for most of what has come down to us is the product of schools, written out by masters and students, of Semitic vernacular, but priding themselves upon writing like thorough Sumerians, much as the 'Grecians' of a Georgian public-school. Scratch anything dubbed Sumerian and there will always be a question lurking under the surface.

So far we have wondered who exactly it was that produced all the fine things splendidly pictured in this book. We have now the equally obscure inquiry, what did these things mean to those who made them? Both of the authors have much to say about the intentions of these early artists and about the character of Sumerian figures: M. Malraux will have it, for example (page xxv), that 'The God Abu does not suggest a person who might look like him; such a person is unthinkable'. Yet, first, there is no proof and no probability that this figure is a 'god' at all—it is only the biggest (and indeed the ugliest) of a group, and if greater in size that is probably because it, with its companion,

represents the rulers of the community. And secondly, the purpose of such figures standing in sanctuaries is well enough known: they were there as perpetual embodiments of their offerers, and their whole intention was to remind the god continually of the said persons. This was curiously developed in later superstitions. We cannot believe, despite M. Malraux, but that all were meant as representations of individuals. Whether their inhuman looks were the result of any scruple or simply of unhandy workmanship (in a somewhat remote district) we could not pronounce.

Again, we do not believe that the comparisons, admitted to be 'far-fetched', on pages xxx and xxxi show any identity of purpose 'not to imitate but to reveal, etc.'—in fact, two of these works, one Sumerian and one medieval, are professed portraits. M. Parrot has a better case with the prehistoric designs on pottery and the clay figurines of the al-Ubaid period. But in these too the free-springing curves of the four goats straighten into the Maltese cross by the same development as the early pictographs straighten and formalize into the cuneiform signs, and the

beast-like figures of al-Ubaid will be found not wholly unlike the descriptions of gods in later texts—gods not of the high pantheon, but attendants, genies, and demons having their places in the service of divine superiors, or in utility to men by heavenly sanction. In no case do we see anything which appears deliberately non-representational. Nor can such a possibility even be suggested to account for our puzzlement before all those other mysteries on clay plaques and above all on cylinder seals—all those scenes and episodes of enacting or warring gods, of epic or ceremonial occasions, before which our explanations are lame or dumb. A few gods' names, a 'Gilgamesh', a 'Dumuzi', a 'Mother-goddess', limp through our descriptions with failing confidence, and we are soon at a halt: look only, for but one and a rather trivial example, at the pictures on the lyre from Ur.

After all these doubts it is time to say something more particular about the splendid book which has, unavoidably, aroused them. No doubt, at least, can be felt about the gratitude we owe to the authors and the publishers for a presentation so exhaustive, so appreciative, and so richly set forth. M. Malraux's preface and M. Parrot's text are followed by a glossarial index (of terms, persons, places, and miscellaneous information), a classified bibliography, and a list of illustrations; all of these are helpful to a considerable extent. But the whole character of the work is in the lavish and carefully studied illustrations—so full are these that the eye can hardly rest upon the text which weaves through them. Colour has been successfully employed, and in the best examples, such as the pottery-designs, the 'Standard' of Ur, and the Mari wall-paintings, it is both impressive and instructive. But the experiment of using a matt black background for objects



Statuettes of worshippers, dating from the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. The two on the left are from Khafaje, those on the right from Tell Asmar

in gold, and still more in bronze, seems rather a failure, the result being neither distinct nor pleasing.

A few liberties have been taken—the fine bronze head from Nineveh (so completely unproven to be that of Sargon) ought not to be represented as if it were of gold; the frontispiece is avowedly from Assyrian art; and perhaps too many of the illustrations depend upon the modern technique of magnification, tending to falsify the effect of the originals. Curiosities are the poor

comparison of a modern photograph with an old drawing (nos. 9 and 10, the 'Caillou de Michaux'), and the precious device of the comparative tables closing each chapter, printed against an enlarged illustration upon a beige background: a trifle is that no. 246 is upside down.

These are no more than some little blemishes which are traditionally required to set forth a face of such beauty as *Sumer* reveals.

Yoga in the Suburbs

By NINIAN SMART

A REVOLUTION in religion is occurring, though it is not everywhere obvious. Thanks to the work of Western orientalists and Eastern exponents, we now have the means to a proper and sympathetic understanding of the great non-Christian religions. In the religious dimension this is revolutionary, simply because Western men are faced for the first time with a wide and perplexing choice of teachings. It is true that Christians have long been aware of Judaism and Islam. The Muslims have been deeply enmeshed in Spain, and we owe some of our science, and even some of our Christian theology, to the Arabs. Islam shares many things with its Judaeo-Christian cousins. But that is precisely why, when you set it beside Hinduism and Buddhism, you notice its likenesses to Christianity rather than the differences. The shock of contrast and novelty comes when we contemplate these other faiths. Few Christians are converted to Islam; and it does not possess the mysterious magnetism of Zen, Vedanta, and Yoga.

An Increasing Force in the West

These things are an increasing force in the West and the signs of their new power are many. A bookseller friend of mine tells me that he sells at least as many books on the Eastern religions as on Christianity—and that in a fashionable, not a specialist, bookshop. In Britain and other Western countries there are flourishing Buddhist societies. London possesses a Vedanta Centre, under the auspices of that excellent organization, the Ramakrishna Mission. There is a group devoted to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo, the yogi and teacher of Pondicherry, whose doctrines were strangely akin to those of Père Teilhard de Chardin. The cult of Zen, though perhaps more noticeable in California than in Chelsea, is well known. Speculations about the *âtman* are not lacking in the cloisters of Oxbridge. There is a widespread interest in the Perennial Philosophy; and even among Christians there is a quickening of concern about strange gods.

I do not want to make too much of all this. Many educated people are still remarkably ignorant about other cultures, and Eastern religions have so far made little impact upon the uneducated. But there is nevertheless a groundswell of religious concern about the East. Perhaps 'neo-protestantism' is a convenient label for it—not Christian protestantism, but an inter-religious protestantism, which sees in the external forms and divisions among religions a barrier between man and Ultimate Reality, which hopes for a way of combining the best in all faiths and of arriving at some true original heart of religion.

Then, again, some people would not be satisfied with this description of their quest. What they are looking for is a new faith. Christian tradition seems outworn to them. Their predicament is that they feel a need for religion, and at the same time a need to repudiate their own tradition. There are many more who apparently have no need for religion at all: for them Zen can have only aesthetic attractions. But I am thinking now rather of those who do have a religious concern.

The situation impinges sharply on the philosophy of religion and on Christian apologetics. It is not simply a matter of a number of people adopting unusual faiths: for deeper down is their perception that older ways of presenting religion and

Christianity are largely outmoded. This can be seen at two levels: the apologetic and the practical.

First, apologetics. A common way of presenting Christianity is to argue rather like this: 'Science cannot tell us about Ultimate Reality, and even philosophy cannot take us very far, if it takes us anywhere at all. No, for the ultimate truth, we must turn to revelation. Now God revealed himself in Christ . . .' Our neo-protestant may well be with the preacher until the last sentence. Yes, we need faith: but in what and in whom? If it is revelation that is in question, why turn to the Bible rather than to the Veda? Or to Christ rather than to the Buddha? The simple appeal to revelation might be acceptable in a society which knows nothing of other faiths. But it begs a large number of questions in our present situation.

As far as I can understand this position, it amounts to saying that God reveals Himself through personal experience and historical events. I shall say nothing about the vexed question of the appeal to history, beyond remarking that it involves a particular view of history which is not unconnected with our personal experience of God; and it is that experience which I propose to consider here.

The marvellous strength of religion no doubt arises principally from the personal experiences of pious and holy men and women. Without such a sense of intimate contact with God, it is hard to explain the central phenomena of the Christian tradition. Nevertheless, it is open to the Buddhist and the Hindu to make precisely the same appeal. Ultimately, indeed, the main truths of these faiths are seen to be true through certain mystical and other experiences. Being less tied to history than the Judaeo-Christian religions, they lay an even greater stress upon inner experience. Yet their doctrinal formulae differ markedly from those of our tradition.

Enriching Western Emptiness

This may not worry some people: for they may feel that the principal point of religion is simply to gain the insights and have the experiences in question. These can give a new direction and centre to life, can enrich an existence which, though usually affluent in Western society, has a certain emptiness. For those neo-protestants who are attracted to Zen, inner realization represents a goal which will give their lives freshness and vision. But questions about truth are secondary or even non-existent. Zen is anti-intellectual, and by repudiating the idea of dogmatic certainties it puts out of count all intellectual doubts.

Certainly religion must mean something in experience; but it has also claimed to tell the truth about the cosmos. To this extent, then, any view of religion which thinks of it *simply* as a means of changing people or engineering experiences is defective. Or, rather, since such a psychological pragmatism is consistent in itself, it is to be distinguished from what religion has traditionally meant. In particular, such a view is incompatible with Christianity as it has been commonly lived and understood. It would therefore be useless to defend Christianity simply by showing that it leads, if properly followed, to certain psychological states. Buddhism might come off better in this respect, for all we know.

On this point, then, our conclusion is bound to be that psycho-

logical pragmatism, though consistent in itself, is a new religion, and is not to be identified with the teachings of the great religions. In other words, religious experience is relevant to apologetics in so far as it is supposed itself to give an insight into the truth. This may not be its only role; but it must be one of its roles.

A Desire to Unify Revelations

What, then, could be said, from the standpoint of religious experience, to show that one religion is true, or truer than the others? Before we can even consider this question, we must remember a strong current of feeling, both among many neo-protestants and among educated Orientals—the feeling that it is an invidious question, and one which hardly arises: for, surely, all the great religions are true. From the Oriental standpoint, the exclusive claims of Christianity are repellent: it is much more charitable and reasonable to think of all religions as true. This idea can be worked out in two ways.

First, it can be said that they all express the same fundamental truth. But the real difficulty here is to specify the said truth; and I have yet to see a convincing account of the fundamental unity of all religions. I do not deny that there are ways in which the great teachings overlap. For example, devotion to a personal God is one facet of Hinduism. But how does one extract a single essence from early Islam, with its dedicated insistence on the duty to worship a single Creator, and Theravada Buddhism, which ignores such a conception altogether? It is not sufficient, in my view, to allege that the Buddha's original teachings were different from those of the Theravada, to bring him in line with Advaita Vedanta or even with theism.

For whatever the original gospel of Buddhism was, the Theravada represents a living stream of religious experience. And so, if we are serious in our appeal to religious experience, it cannot be thus summarily set aside. In arguments I have had with the exponents of fundamental unity, both in India and here, I have generally found that they have taken refuge in the ineffability of the highest truth. Certainly one cannot express religious truth in a perfectly clear and full manner, as many theologians, in both East and West, have recognized. But religious truth cannot be completely ineffable, for that which cannot be expressed in any way can neither be believed nor disbelieved. The completely inexpressible can therefore be neither true nor false. In other words, this way of defending the thesis of fundamental unity amounts at best to psychological pragmatism. It amounts to saying that all religions lead you to a higher insight which tells you nothing—in short to a pure psychological state.

Another way of unifying revelations is perhaps more familiar. It involves saying that though teachings and insights differ, this is because they express different stages or levels of religious experience. For example, the great Hindu theologian Shankara regarded the idea of a personal God, the object of worship, as inferior to that of the absolute. For the highest truth is that the world conceived as distinct from Ultimate Reality is illusory.

Varying Religious Experiences

Consequently, the Creator shares in this illusoriness. Again, Mahayana Buddhists regard the Theravada as representing only one stage, the earliest stage, in a developing revelation. Thus different aspects of the great religions can be arranged in a hierarchy of importance. The advantage of this kind of approach is that it at least recognizes that there are different types of religious experience. It is, in my view, an error to suppose that all the important experiences told of in religion—like that of St. Paul on the Damascus road, the Buddha's Enlightenment, the prophetic rapture of Muhammad—are identical in nature and content.

Nevertheless, the approach solves little, for disagreements will break out afresh at a different level. Hindu theology can find a place for Christian theism, as Professor Radhakrishnan has shown. Vice versa, Christian theology can find a place for the insights of Hinduism, as Professor Zaehner has argued. But why start from Christian rather than Hindu premisses? It is vital in the present situation for a religion to have a view of the place of other religions in relation to its own revelation. But this is less apologetics than inter-religious dogmatics. Where it involves

a proper appreciation of the depth of teachings and the richness of the living experience found in other faiths, it is important and fruitful. But it still leaves the main problem untouched.

It is surely necessary to consider, too, the canons of inter-religious judgment. That is, it is necessary to be clear about what kinds of reasons are relevant in arguing about religions. This itself involves a deep acquaintance with the phenomenology of religion. It is, therefore, an inquiry within both the philosophy of religion and the comparative study of religions. These two disciplines cannot be kept apart. It is therefore particularly sad that so little attention is paid in theological and philosophical circles in this country to the study of religions.

Let me give one example and one conclusion of the investigation into the canons of religious judgment. First, one can make a fairly clear distinction between the prophetic experience, highly numinous in character, and the interior vision gained by contemplatives. This fact itself helps to explain the distinction between early Islam and the Theravada to which I alluded. Both these strands of experience are of profound importance to religion, and I think that it is a relevant argument, backed by the later history of Islam and of Buddhism, that a religion must respect both these kinds of insight. Which type should be subordinated to the other leads to further arguments. But already we can see, in the barest outline, some of the kinds of deeper reflection which are relevant to religious judgment. If such thoughts are pursued with sufficient sensitivity and clarity, we have the material for a new kind of natural theology.

Where Dogmatic Argument is Out of Place

Second, such religious arguments are not decisive and certainly not deductive. They are more like arguments in aesthetics. I do not believe, in any case, that there are any knock-down arguments in religion; but this does not minimize the importance of arguing. The critic who merely registers his own thrills and shudders without trying to illuminate the grounds of aesthetic judgment is not of much use. Likewise the irrationalistic apologist has little value and *should* have no beliefs. But this softness of our arguments does imply something about the nature of religious truth. It presupposes on the one hand that we are respecting revelations, for they provide the materials for our reflection, just as they provide a guide for religious behaviour. On the other hand, dogmatic argument, pretending to be more certain than the facts warrant, is out of place. But perhaps such a blend of conservatism and agnosticism corresponds to an important strand in Christian theology.

At the level, then, of apologetics, the Christian needs to defend his faith as fulfilling the higher insights of the great religions; but not simply by taking Christianity for granted and then interpreting the others in that light. Such inter-religious dogmatics are necessary; but not sufficient. No: it is necessary as well to use the principles of religious argument shared by non-Christian believers, and it is necessary to show the reasons for a particular balancing of spiritual insights. For example, I referred to the distinction between the numinous and mystical experiences. But whereas an interpretation of the contemplative experience as being a vision of God is plausible and preserves both the numinous and mystical elements in an illuminating tension, the impersonal interpretation of Advaitin and Buddhist mysticism tends to relegate the numinous to a shabby second place. Briefly, the mystical tends to engulf the numinous; but the numinous can fulfil the mystical. This, in my view, is the principal virtue of theism.

This particular argument is only one among others; but whatever else may be said about it, it is recognizably relevant within the ambit of both Christian and non-Christian ways of thinking. And it does not involve the tacit acceptance of any specifically Christian premisses. It is pleasant to get away from circular arguments in religion. I need hardly say that such considerations figure little enough in the teachings of contemporary Christian theologians. Mesmerized by questions about biblical historicity, they forget the wider world.

Christian theology and teaching are defective also at a more practical level. It is implicit in what I have said that the great non-Christian religions contain spiritual insights. But these themselves are closely tied to behaviour and religious practice. How

can one understand God without understanding worship? Or the Absolute of Mahayana Buddhists without reference to contemplation? Or Zen, for that matter, without its techniques? It follows that we must take into account the practical fruits of the non-Christian faiths. To many neo-protestants the trouble with contemporary Christianity is that it is insufficiently practical. In this country it too often seems to them as though church-going, fitful repentance, and good works are held to be enough. In contrast, the East offers yoga and the training techniques of Buddhism. This itself indicates that the contemplative endeavour is not stressed enough in contemporary, and especially protestant, Christianity—an imbalance, I suspect, due to over-emphasis on

the prophetic, Old Testament, side of Christianity. Contemplation is not for everyone; but it grows out of the religious life, and religion, in society, is organic. We have largely forgotten one of the limbs of the organism.

At both the apologetic and practical levels, then, Eastern religions are an important challenge to Christianity. As the Church has had to come to terms with Plato, so it must with the Buddha. An old-fashioned narrowness, smugly confident of Christianity's innate and unarguable superiority, is hateful to Orientals and is un-Christian in spirit. It is fatal in philosophy, damaging to apologetics, and the last refuge of the religious ostrich.—*Third Programme*

Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on broadcasting subjects or topics arising out of articles printed in THE LISTENER but reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

Britain's Colour Problem

Sir,—I disagree with Mr. Blundell's letter (THE LISTENER, January 5) and his remarks about Franklin Frazier's talk on 'Britain's Colour Problem'.

I found Mr. Frazier's talk true, theoretically and practically. Whilst understanding Mr. Blundell's resentment, I found his views rather muddled and somewhat ambivalent.

First, the housing problem in my opinion is a vicious circle, which is added to by the general shortage of accommodation in this island. Not enough English people offer accommodation, so overcrowding results, putting more white people against offering rooms to coloured people, and so on.

Regarding the noisiness and the flamboyance that Mr. Blundell refers to, some coloured people are flamboyant, compared with staid English people like myself. A lot of Continental people are also flamboyant, and so are some of our American cousins. But people do not refer to these two groups of people as being 100 years behind us.

The standard of living that Mr. Blundell wants to uphold, 'against those who would despoil it', has been achieved to a certain degree by cheap coloured labour in the past. And even in England today, certain essential menial jobs which English people do not want are performed by coloured people. Unless coloured people (and other white people in poorer countries) are given the chance to obtain our standard of living, we may not be able to enjoy ours much longer.

Owing to the diversity of types of coloured people in Britain doing jobs which vary from road sweepers to doctors, and from many lands including the West Indies, Africa, and India, it is impossible to make generalizations about their habits.

It is essential for English people to regard coloured people and their actions, both good and bad, in exactly the same way as a similar action done by white people. How many English people can in all honesty say that they do? If the majority of people read in the newspapers at various intervals of crimes of the same degree of seriousness committed by coloured and white people, they would regard the crimes committed by the coloured people as being worse than those committed by white people.

If the person Mr. Blundell refers to who took in the student that played jazz records had taken in a student from the north of England, who had the same habit, would she be against northerners for ever?

In Mr. Blundell's final paragraph, he refers to the resentment in Notting Hill at the time of riots, as being justified. If he means that the resentment justified the injuries inflicted both by coloured and white people on one another then all I can say is that it is a good thing for us, and our already overworked police and hospital services, that we don't all show our resentment in the same way.

The problem can be solved in a practical way, as the work of the Multi-Racial Tenants' Association in Notting Hill shows. There is a similar organization in Birmingham, which seeks to avoid overcrowding and see that the council workers do such jobs as emptying the dust-bins of coloured people, so as to avoid

resentment against untidiness which white people put down to the fault of the coloured people.

Finally I should say that I work in a hospital with people from many overseas countries, both Continental and coloured. I find these words by Andrew Marvell so wonderfully true:

The world in all doth but two nations bear,—

The good, the bad; and these mixed everywhere.

Sometimes, when I have been tempted to feel resentment towards whole groups of people, I remember and realize the whole-hearted truth of Marvell's words.

Yours, etc.,

Dartford

T. C. WALSTER

Sir,—Having seen what Jamaicans can do, not only to what was a 'clean and neat house' but to a whole neighbourhood, I can heartily endorse what Mr. Blundell writes. It has converted me to be a fanatical segregationist. These people should never be inflicted upon civilized persons. Their gross and intolerable noisiness is alone enough to condemn such enforced proximity, as thousands and thousands of white victims know.—Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.10

H. RUSSELL WAKEFIELD

Sir,—Mr. Blundell has over-simplified the housing problems of coloured immigrants to the point of the ridiculous. The relationship between 'sub-standard folk' and 'living twenty-seven to a house' is not that of simple cause and effect but is a vicious circle which by no means always begins with the immigrants. If Mr. Blundell had spent more time finding out the real reasons why many coloured people in London are living in the cramped conditions which he describes, he would have been entitled to more respect than his present letter deserves. His generalizations about slums, as if they were the creation of the immigrants, beg all the questions which such areas as Notting Dale or Stepney raise. One fact which all the recent work in this field, by Glass, Banton, Ruck, and others, has stressed is the way in which discrimination has itself created the cramped conditions which it deplures and the concentration of immigrants in districts which are already slum and problem areas. A dangerous chain reaction is thus set up. Mr. Blundell's sweeping 'They will take 100 years to catch up with us' shows that he thinks he knows where the chain starts.

In fact his letter suggests that he neither knows nor cares. He is content to offer us an image of the coloured man and the criteria he has used are indicated in the paragraph which starts 'One person I knew . . .'. But at least two areas of settlement in London were seething with corruption for generations before the immigrants arrived, and there is little evidence that they have seriously accentuated it. Clearly, the urgent task is the removal of those real causes of friction which lie in the social framework of our towns: people who believe that the Jamaican comes to England ready-made for trouble are as useless to social policy as are those who rhetorically scream, 'What would you do if a black man raped your sister?'—Yours, etc.,

London, E.3

KENNETH LEECH

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DUNLOP SYMBOL OF PROGRESS

Sir,—As an American, interested in the talk on 'Britain's Colour Problem', I wish the British and the Europeans in general would not brand Americans as having an established or legalized system of racial discrimination, but, rather, refer to the Southern U.S. citizens, as having such. The people who are guilty of these things are the southerners. If you take out the southern white population and then weed out of them the anti-segregationists (these are few, I must admit) you would find that the ratio as compared to the total population in the U.S. is very small.

Furthermore, it is unfair to compare the status of the coloured person in the south of the U.S. to London, or anywhere else in Britain.

In Memphis, Tennessee, for instance (where I happened to live for two years), or many other areas of the south, the Negroes outnumber the whites by three to one. It is easy to be tolerant, broad-minded, or whatever you choose to call it, when you, as a white, are in the majority group.

In the talk it mentions Ruth Glass and her book, *Newcomers*. She admits that there are areas in London, such as Notting Hill, where racial riots exist. Think what would happen if there were twenty-seven Notting Hill areas, if the coloured races magnified themselves in population until there were three Negroes to every white in London! What about racial prejudices then? I am not denying that racial discrimination exists in the States. It certainly does. I have seen evidence of it, and loathed what I saw.

One of our statesmen recently remarked that we in the North would have been better off if we had allowed the South to secede from the Union.

If any future comparisons are made of the coloured races in Britain to the States, I wish these would be made on an even basis to the States of the North; in the city districts of New York or Chicago, for instance. I believe if Miss Glass or Mr. Franklin Frazier had lived in our northern U.S.A. for any length of time, they would have found that the coloured status would be quite similar to that in London or any other built-up area in Britain.

Yours, etc.,

Richmond, Surrey

BETTY JALLEY

A Visit to Rumania

Sir,—I refer to a talk published in your number of December 29, 1960, entitled 'A Visit to Rumania'. As a resident of Bucharest for many years I feel I must point out certain errors of fact. The feast of St. Demetrius occurs on October 26 and not at the end of November. Climatically November is one of the worst months in Rumania and I cannot recollect any open air café in use in the evenings at the end of it, which are usually bitterly cold.

I had looked forward to this broadcast eagerly as I had hoped for some real information about my country but was grieved and disappointed at what I heard.—Yours, etc.,

Fordingbridge

GERTRUDE CLARK-TURNER

The Touareg of the Sahara

Sir,—Mr. Edward Ward (*THE LISTENER*, December 29) confuses the Hamites (which race includes Touaregs and other Berber-speaking peoples) with the Semites (to which race belonged the Phoenician people). The Philistines, or Pelishtim, who gave Palestine its name, were of unknown origin. They first appeared in recorded history moving around the Anatolian coast into the Levant.

As for the male Touaregs' veils, it has been suggested that they are worn in order to prevent sun-tan. This is understandable in view of battles against the Fulani, or Peuhls, over oases. Ancient Europeans used to emphasize their physical characteristics for military purposes.—Yours, etc.,

Waterford

PATRICK J. N. BURY

'A New University'

Sir,—In my review, for which Mr. Plowden takes me to task (*THE LISTENER*, January 5), I was careful to point out that the reader of Professor Gallie's book could check for himself my estimate of Lindsay's philosophical and general ideas. Consequently, whether I had antecedent knowledge of them or not is

irrelevant. If that knowledge was 'superficial', as Mr. Plowden asserts, it was not for lack of opportunities for gaining deeper insight.

I attended Lindsay's lectures on the Theory of the Modern State thrice weekly in 1920 or 1921, and went to at least two discourses that he gave to philosophical societies. Between his return to Oxford in 1924 and the second world war I saw him frequently. By 1926 my relations with him were excellent, and I took certain actions on his instructions in the General Strike of that year. I was chairman of the committee which sponsored him as an 'Independent Progressive' Parliamentary candidate shortly after Munich and which managed his campaign in the by-election. I was subsequently chairman of a committee drawn from all the Parliamentary divisions near Oxford, which had its meetings in Lindsay's house and tried to establish an inter-party anti-Munich front. I had frequent discussions and negotiations with him about the development of economic studies in Oxford, including the foundation of Nuffield College, and many other contacts also.

I had a deep regard for Lindsay, although recognizing faults. And in my review I expressed regret that Professor Gallie's book, although praiseworthy in a number of ways, was not likely to make Lindsay's critics appreciate his elements of greatness.

Mr. Plowden's aspersions on my deviation from 'the old English spirit of decency and fair play' ignore the fact that professional historians, both before and after 1914, and in England no less than elsewhere, have been subject to a strict moral obligation. It is their duty to do their best to set the characters of whom they write in correct perspective, neither raising them above nor degrading them below their true level.—Yours, etc.,

Oxford

ROY HARROD

A Lullaby for the Newly Dead

Sleep away the years,
Sleep away the pain,
Wake, tomorrow,
A girl again.

Undo the proud journey
Mile upon mile,
Let the light bring only
A future and a smile.

Sleep away the loss,
Sleep away the gain,
Wake, tomorrow,
A girl again.

Sell back the knowledge
So dear bought
For the pennies of wonder
In a child's thought.

Sleep away the storm,
Sleep away the rain,
Wake, tomorrow,
A girl again.

Take up the forgotten
Running, dancing,
You are lighter now
Than a swift on the wing.

Let the world be a hero
And let the blood speak
For his coming with a pennon
In the lips, in the cheek.

Sleep away your loves,
The rose, the chain,
Wake, tomorrow,
A girl again.

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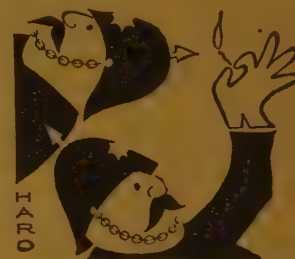
ADDRESS

(Dept. TL1)

O elusive Paul Jennings!

THERE ARE 284 Jenningses in the London telephone directory. But he isn't one of them. I once knew a regiment that had six Jenningses. But he wasn't there either.

Paul Jennings lives at East Bergholt, has a wife, children and a regular column (called Oddly Enough) in The Observer. If you don't know him, it's high time you did.



If you do know him don't sit back just yet. I have a problem for you. Can you think of a better word than 'elusive'?

You can't call him 'incomparable'. He positively invites comparison. He is, for example, as funny as twenty comedians and three times as enlightening.

He isn't inimitable either. People do imitate him. And not only his style—his Weltanschauung (or way of looking at the world) has had a considerable Einfluss (or influence).

Early on, Jennings discovered the basic conflict between People and Things—a battle as universal as the Sex War, and much funnier to write about. Would you trust the inside of a car? Or a typewriter? Or an Italian water-tap? You shouldn't, but if you must, at least arm yourself with the Jennings reports on the way these Things can annoy, confuse and embarrass People.

Yet Skram backwards

No, elusive seems to be the word. Jennings seems to have a strange knack of finding things that other people wouldn't even think of looking for. Did you know that the Danish for King Kong is Kong King? (Kong means King in Danish). Had you realised that the innocent-seeming town of Marks Tey was Yet Skram backwards?

Another thing. If you have anything like Jennings' luck, you may well buy The Observer 26 times a year, yet never see him. Elusive to the last, he appears only every other Sunday.

All in all, it's quite a good idea to take The Observer every week. It's the only way you can be sure of not missing Jennings—and Profile, Mammon, the Feiffer cartoon and all the other good things that make Sunday morning so bearable in fortunate Britain.

J.B.L.

A Visit to Uzbekistan

By NEVILL BARBOUR

IT was a grey, cold, wet morning when we boarded the big jet aircraft in Moscow. Four hours later and 1,500 miles away we landed in Tashkent, whose hot sun and bright sky belonged to another world. Those of us who had lived in the Middle East felt that we had arrived home. There was the same climate, a similar vegetation, the feel of an Islamic background and, going on all round us, the same transformation of the medieval into the modern world.

I was one of more than a hundred orientals, and as such we were more interested in the Muslim past than in Russian colonization. For the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, whose capital is Tashkent, contains some famous Muslim cities. Bukhara was the capital of an independent Muslim kingdom for more than 400 years, ending soon after the Russian revolution. Five-and-a-half centuries ago Samarkand was the capital of the great Mongol conqueror, Timur Leng, who made the city one of the wonders of the world, celebrated in travellers' tales and in the odes of the poets, not only in the House of Islam but also throughout the whole world.

Many of us were surprised by the wealth of Uzbekistan. This Republic of the Soviet Union lies 200 miles east of the Caspian Sea, from which it is separated by part of Kazakhstan. Apart from a short stretch of frontier with Afghanistan, it is entirely surrounded by other Republics of the Soviet Union, all of which were formerly the homes of independent Muslim peoples. With the exception of the people of Tajikistan, who speak a language

akin to Iranian, all these peoples speak a form of Turki. Much of Uzbekistan is sandy desert, and it owes its fortune to the fact that its eastern province is a valley running up into the mighty mountain ranges of central Asia. From these mountains of eternal snow, streams and rivers run down into Uzbekistan. The Syr Daria in the east, the Zarafshan in the centre, and the Amu Daria, or Oxus, in the west are to Uzbekistan what the Tigris and the Euphrates are to Iraq.

In area Uzbekistan is slightly smaller than Iraq, though the proportion of fertile land to desert is greater. Its agriculture is thus immensely rich and has hitherto been the chief source of the country's wealth, though industry has also been developed. The country's agricultural prosperity once caused Timur Leng to make Samarkand his capital, and in the last century it caused the Russians to make Uzbekistan their chief centre of colonization. The Russian army, in fact, arrived about 1850, a little after the time when the French army conquered Algiers and

a little before the English occupied Egypt. Today Uzbekistan is, after the United States and China, the greatest producer of cotton in the world, yielding more than Egypt and enough to supply two-thirds of the total consumption of the whole Soviet Union. It also has the largest textile mill in the U.S.S.R.

From Tashkent we travelled to Bukhara in a small aircraft which covered the 300 miles in about two hours. After flying over fertile land for some time we reached an area of desert, which was later followed by another zone of cultivation. In fact, the cities of western Uzbekistan are the centres of oases. The region of Bukhara suffered greatly from the encroachment of the surrounding deserts for hundreds of years, but much has been done recently to remedy this. The area has, however, long been famous for its rich fruits, its cotton, its silk, and the famous sheepskins known as caracul or astrakhan.

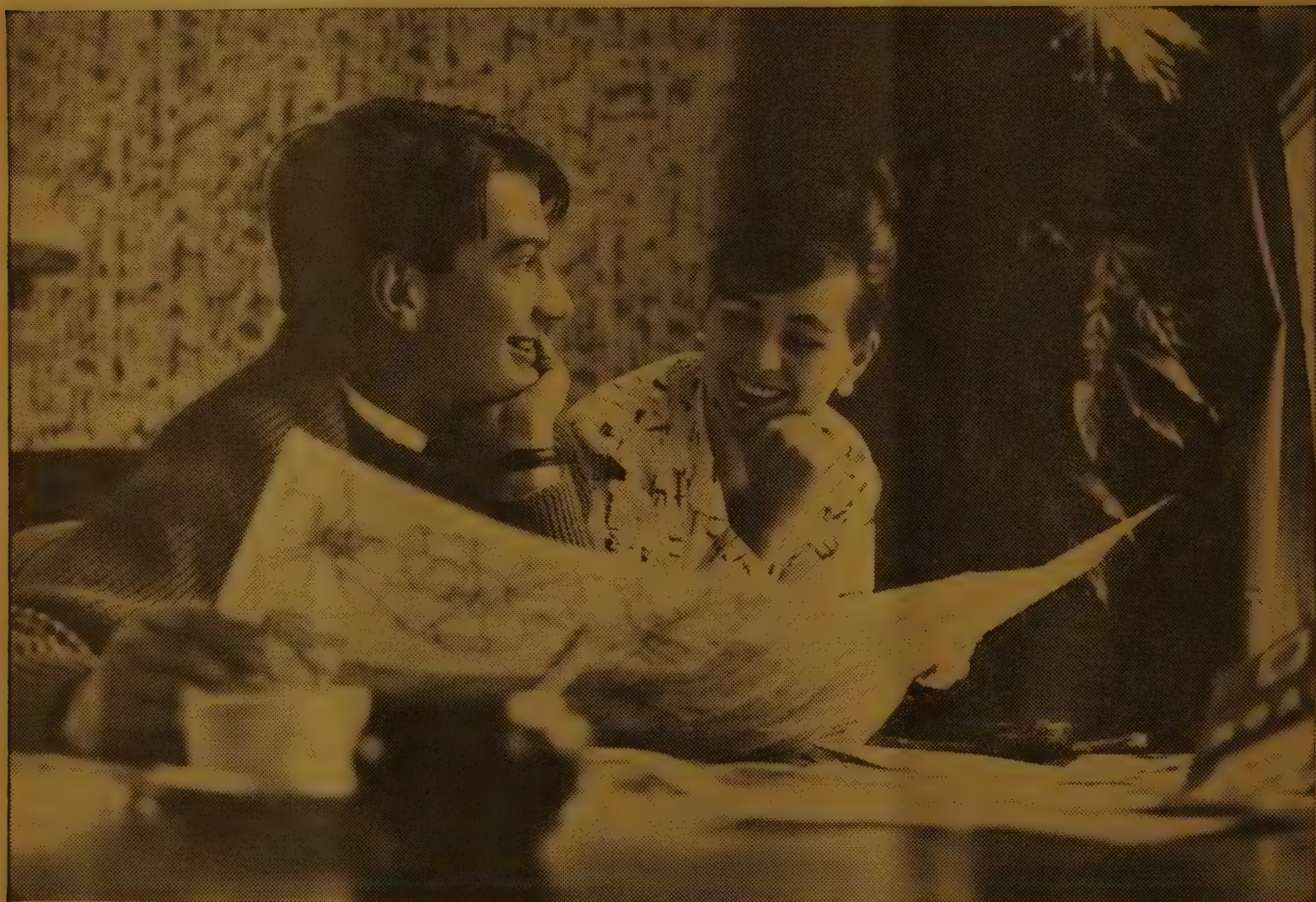
Forty years ago Bukhara was an independent Muslim state. The city, with its 364 mosques and 109 madrasas, was a renowned centre of Muslim civilization; it was famous, too, for its many covered suqs, more extensive than those of Aleppo. Today most of the old buildings are disused and the suqs have been abolished. Only the finer buildings, together with some specimens of the former suqs and a strip of the old city walls, have been preserved as historic monuments. Unlike Tashkent and Samarkand, which have grown enormously in recent years, Bukhara still has only the 80,000 inhabitants which it had fifty years ago. It seems that the Soviet Government, after destroying the independence of the Bukhara emirate, preferred to develop those cities in which the Russian colonists were numerous rather than Bukhara, where Muslim sentiment was still powerful and might form the nucleus of revolt. It is in fact only in the last two years that foreign visitors have been admitted to Bukhara.

Now the prospects of development are great. Not only have measures of water control driven back the desert, but vast



Children in the kindergarten of a collective farm in Uzbekistan

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quantities of natural gas have been discovered in the north-west. Some of the gas is to be led all the way to the Urals, while another pipeline 400 miles long will lead it past Bukhara to Tashkent. From the material point of view, therefore, Bukhara is certainly progressing. The children look well cared for and they are adequately clothed. Schools and medical services have been provided; and the natural gas will soon bring industrial wealth. But for the time being the chief interest of Bukhara lies not in any modern developments but in the remains of the great Islamic monuments of the past.

We saw much evidence of restoration work on the ancient monuments, carried out by local craftsmen. We were informed that for the current year the Uzbekistan Government had voted the equivalent of about £1,000,000 sterling for renovations in Bukhara alone. We saw work proceeding on the famous Kalyan mosque, built more than 400 years ago, and on its neighbour and contemporary, the Mir Arab madrasa (higher Muslim school). Adjoining these is the splendid minaret, 200 feet high, famous both for its architectural beauty and for the fact that until ninety years ago criminals used to be executed by being cast from its summit. Among other monuments we also visited the citadel which was once the town residence of the emir and contained the government offices. Since the revolution it has been converted into a museum of horrors, designed to illustrate the cruelty and injustice of the Muslim emirate and what communists call the evils of religion and superstition.

Our last visit of the day was to the underground dungeons where prisoners used to be lodged in semi-darkness until execution or a change of mind on the part of the emir released them. It was here that two English envoys were imprisoned while awaiting execution in the year 1842 of the western calendar. They had come on a mission to Bukhara at a time when Russia and Britain, then ruling India, were rivals for trade and influence in central Asia.

From Bukhara we flew on a further 150 miles to Samarkand. As we drove from the airport to the city of Samarkand, both I and a Syrian in the party were struck by the resemblance with the approach to Damascus along the Barada river. Above us were bare hills; beside us was a rushing torrent lined with vegetation recalling that by the Syrian stream.

One of the most ancient cities in the world, Samarkand is today a flourishing modern city of some 200,000 people, of whom a high proportion are Russian settlers. But the unique interest of the city for the orientalist and traveller comes from the numerous magnificent monuments of the Muslim period of its history. Five sites are particularly striking. There is the tomb of Timur himself, the Gur-i-Mir or world conqueror, with its huge slabs of dark green jade and blue tiled dome. Then there are the tombs of



The beautiful minaret near the Kalyan mosque in Bukhara

Timur's relatives and associates at Shah Zinda, with more of the blue melon-shaped domes. There is also the monument in memory of Qusam ibn al-Abbas, who is said to have converted the people of Samarkand to Islam in the time of the Caliph Uthman. On the door of this monument is the inscription: 'The

doors of Paradise are opened before the poor, and mercy descends upon the merciful'. Above the door, inscribed in faience, is the saying attributed to the prophet: 'Verily Qusam ibn al-Abbas is the person most like myself in looks and character'. Between Shah Zinda and the centre of the town stand the remains of the great mosque, Bibi Khanum, named after Timur's favourite wife. It is in a ruinous state, but its stupendous proportions and gigantic portals make it one of the wonders of the world. Immensely impressive also is the Registan—a square with madrasas on three sides, with a mosque attached. The fourth side, once occupied by shops, is now open and backed by a park.

The oldest of the three madrasas was built by Timur's grandson and successor, Ulug Beg, who was also the originator of Samarkand's astronomical observatory, being the greatest astronomer of his age. Ulug Beg's scientific pursuits brought him into conflict with some of the religious authorities of Samarkand, and for this reason he is honoured by the communists who, with much exaggeration, claim him as an anti-religious leader practising a kind of Marxist-Leninist materialism 500 years before Marx and Lenin were born. They attribute to him the saying that 'religions melt away like mist and kingdoms are destroyed; but the work of scientists lasts for ever'. But it seems unlikely that Ulug Beg saw any conflict between true religion and science. On one of the religious



The tomb of Timur at Samarkand



Navoi Street, Tashkent

buildings he erected in Samarkand he wrote: 'It is the duty of every Muslim, man and woman, to enlighten their minds'. Perhaps the noblest tribute to Ulug Beg came from the great Uzbek poet, Alisher Navoi, who said: 'Ulug Beg stretched his hands out to the firmament; in response to his achievements the sky grew near and came down before his eyes'.

In Samarkand we were able to see something of the remarkable development of dramatic art in Uzbekistan. One night some of us watched an excellent performance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, played by Uzbek actors, in Uzbek, to an Uzbek audience. On our second night the same company presented a play on the life of the national poet, Alisher Navoi. Unfortunately I was unable to attend this performance and instead I and some of my companions listened to an open-air concert of Uzbek music played by a local orchestra. For the most part this was so much like Arab music that, if I had closed my eyes and forgotten where I was, I should have supposed myself to have been listening to Arab performers. There are of course other local styles of music which owe more to influences from further East.

From Samarkand we returned direct to Tashkent, where Russians form the majority of the 1,000,000 inhabitants in the city and amount to 30 per cent. of the population of the entire province, as opposed to about 11 per cent. in Uzbekistan as a whole. In Tashkent resides al-Sayyid Zia el Din ibn Baba Khan, Grand Mufti of the Muslims of Central Asia and of Kazakhstan, to give him his official title. He is a man of about fifty, active, eloquent, and with a perfect mastery of Arabic. At a luncheon given for the orientalists of the party he answered questions about the position of Muslims in central Asia. It must be remembered that the Soviet Government, itself strongly anti-religious, controls all religious activities, and this perhaps explains why His Eminence referred in his speech to himself and his assistants as 'those of us who still believe in God and have the task of maintaining this theological seminary'.

It may seem strange that religion can be practised at all. The fact is that a whole generation has now been trained in atheism, so that one does not usually ask whether a person is Muslim or Christian but whether his parents or grandparents were Muslim or Christian. Small wonder that the authorities see no danger in allowing a few elderly people still to worship God in their mosques or churches. Once there were 109 madrasas in Bukhara alone. Now there are only two for all the Muslims of Central Asia. For some years past they have been permitted to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. In fact last year only six old men made the journey. Recently, however, there has been a slightly greater religious tolerance, permitting the publication of copies of the Koran in the form of a photostatic edition of the well-known Azhar edition of the Hijra year 1337.

An Uzbek girl saw me examining a very beautiful and ancient copy of the Koran, and asked me to explain to her the meaning

of the Fatiha (the short opening chapter). I did so, and she remarked: 'How many beautiful and deep thoughts that contains!' I cannot say whether her isolated remark indicates any possibility of an Islamic revival in central Asia. But there were other signs that Islam lives on. I was impressed when I learned in Leningrad, far away in European Russia, that fifty Muslims of that city attend prayers daily at its handsome mosque, and that as many as 2,000 or 3,000 attend prayers at the Ids (the principal Muslim festivals).

Uzbekistan is a natural centre of Muslim life. It was from here that the Mongols went forth, first as pagans and then as Muslims, to the conquest and colonization of Russian territory. Thus Russia, like Spain, was for a long time the traditional enemy of the Muslims; like al-Andalus, Russia absorbed influences from Muslim civilization which have left profound traces in Russian civilization to the present time. But the position of the Muslims in central Asia today is very different from the position of those in the Middle East, where independent Muslim states exist and are able to help one another.

Almost everything is against them in their religious capacity in the Soviet Union. There are three reasons for this: a traditional hostility inherited by the Russians from their Tsarist Christian forefathers, communist hatred of religion of any kind, and Russian fears that a revival of Islam might also mean a revival of Muslim desire for political freedom and independence.

There are pronounced national differences in the various republics which form the Soviet Union, surviving in spite of a certain uniformity on the surface. This was noticeable in the Ukraine and Georgia, and especially in Uzbekistan. I noticed the flourishing Uzbek cultural life, in music, drama and literature generally. I noticed that some elements of the national dress are still worn by many men and women, and that Uzbek children receive instruction in their own language at Uzbek schools. It seems that national characteristics are approved provided that they have no political significance. In similar circumstances the absence of any desire for national existence as an independent state would have been thought astonishing anywhere among the Muslims who used to be ruled by Western Powers.

Yet there has been nationalist feeling among Uzbeks. Bukhara, for instance, tried to break away after the revolution in Russia. In 1937 Stalin's regime tried and executed two Uzbek leaders accused of nationalism. According to the Soviet constitution Uzbekistan, like the other former Russian colonies in Asia, has the right to secede from the Union, but separate national political life is not tolerated, and the question of secession has never arisen. In some ways the relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan resembles that between France and the people of North Africa. There is an essential difference. Tunisia and Morocco are now independent states, and Algeria will one day be a self-governing state, whether closely linked with France or not. Uzbekistan, however, is firmly attached to Russia, and the number of Russian settlers there is constantly increasing. It is true that Russian rule has given the Uzbeks great material benefits, such as good medical services, education and industrial developments, but all this has been done for the benefit of the Moscow empire not for that of a free Muslim world.

We received no clear answer when we asked why there were only 30 per cent. of Uzbeks among the workers and none at all in the management of a tea factory which we visited during our tour. The fact is, of course, that the Muslims yielded to force in their struggle with Tsarist Russia and its communist successor. It seems to me that it is only in the atmosphere of free thought and institutions of the Western world that colonial people have an opportunity of gaining their independence. After forty years Soviet rule is so firmly established in Uzbekistan that Moscow feels it safe to allow a limited contact with the outside world. Consequently my fellow orientalists and I were allowed to make a journey which we greatly enjoyed, and for which we are very grateful.—From a talk in the Arabic Service

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B.B.C. NEWS HEADLINES

January 4-10

Wednesday, January 4

The United States breaks off diplomatic relations with Cuba

The Trades Union Congress agrees to lend £50,000 to the Belgian Federation of Labour

Many B.E.A. and B.O.A.C. passenger flights from London Airport are cancelled owing to a token strike by engineers and maintenance men

Thursday, January 5

As a protest against the recent atomic test in Sahara, the Nigerian Government orders the French Ambassador and his staff to leave the country within forty-eight hours

King Baudouin consults Belgium's political leaders in an effort to find a solution that would end the strikes

Minister of Education proposes changes in technical education in Britain

Friday, January 6

Polling starts in Algeria in referendum on the country's future

The dispute over pay claim by maintenance men at London Airport is settled

About 17,000 workers at Ford's of Dagenham are to work a three-day week because of the decline in demand for motor-cars

Saturday, January 7

The African States meeting at Casablanca tell their members to withdraw their forces from the Congo unless Mr. Lumumba is restored to power

At least eleven people are killed in Algeria during second day's voting there in the referendum

Sunday, January 8

Referendum is held in France on the future of Algeria

All Viscount 700 aircraft are to be inspected following discovery of cracks in wings in two aircraft of Central African Airways

Three men and two women are detained in custody at Bow Street, London, on charges under Official Secrets Act

Monday, January 9

The Belgian Government recalls more units of the army from West Germany to deal with the disturbances at home

An increase in pay for shipbuilding workers is agreed on between the employers and the unions

An Anglo-Soviet agreement on cultural exchanges during the next two years is signed in Moscow

Tuesday, January 10

The Chancellor of the Exchequer warns that Britain faces fresh dangers of inflation, and he makes a plea to industry to keep down costs

The Minister of Aviation arrives in West Germany for talks on joint space research



Muslim women, many carrying children, queuing outside a polling station in a village on the outskirts of Algiers on January 6, the first day of the French national referendum on the future of Algeria. The result was a clear majority in favour of President de Gaulle's plan for Algeria



Cuban women of a workers' militia unit marching in a parade in Havana on January 2 to mark the second anniversary of Fidel Castro's seizure of power. They carry Tommy guns manufactured in Czechoslovakia. (See also page 58)



The Springboks, the South African Rugby football team, during their present tour, beat England by 5 points on Saturday: D. J. Hopwood (South Africa) tackled by W. G. L.





Strikers building a barricade in Liège where last week some of the most violent disturbances took place since the nation-wide strikes in Belgium began over three weeks ago. Mounted police and troops were used to disperse the rioters



to have won every
t Twickenham last
n and L. I. Rimmer



Left: skiers on the slopes of the Cairn gorms, Scotland, where conditions for winter sports this month have been excellent



Some of the leaders of the African states who met in conference at Casablanca last week, photographed on their way to the city's mosque on Friday, January 6, the Moslem Sabbath. Left to right are Diallo Saifoulay, President of the Guinea National Assembly; Ferhat Abbas, Prime Minister of the Algerian 'Provisional Government'; President Nasser of the United Arab Republic; King Mohammed V of Morocco and President Modibo Keita of Mali. The conference ended last Saturday with a decision to set up an African High Command of Chiefs of Staff



A commando of the Royal Marines climbing down a model cliff face at the Camping and Outdoor Life exhibition which opened last week at Olympia, London



The tower of a gateway into Mindelheim, south Germany, 'wearing' fancy dress of painted canvas for the town's carnival

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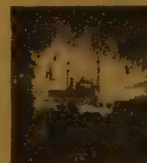
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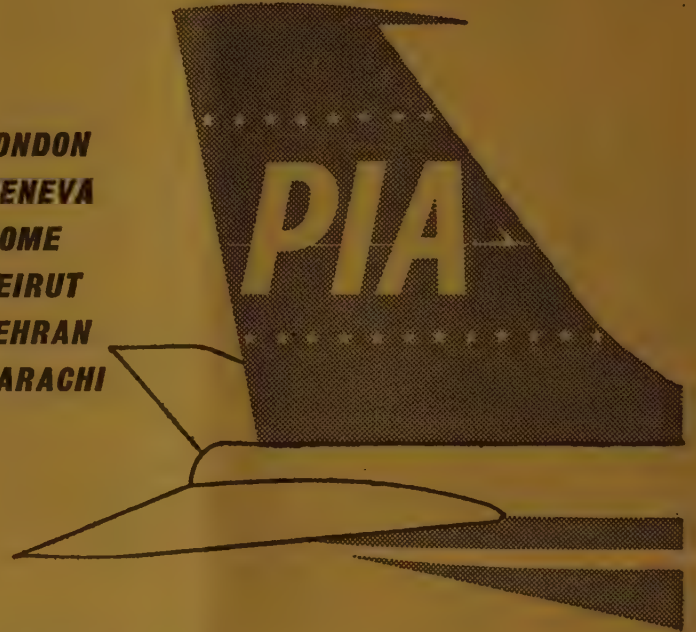
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The White Mountains of Crete

By MICHAEL LLEWELLYN SMITH

WESTERN CRETE: home of the fabulous plant dittany, whose healing powers have been admired since Homer's day: home of the unique 'agrinion', the Cretan ibex: home of the Spakiots, who kept alive the spark of independence in the darkest times of Turkish domination: a harsh, bare country, which moulds its people in its own image: a poor country where pleasures are few and the failure of the grape harvest can mean starvation: a country where disillusioned dons can go to find the noble savage, and where I found a society in a state of suspended animation. The mountain songs still uphold the traditional heroic ideal of 'levendia', the gallant attitude to life. But the successive oppressors of the Cretans have gone and the songs now exist in a vacuum. For the first time in hundreds of years there is no enemy. The Cretan mountaineer is living in the past, but the twentieth century is beginning to catch up with him.

Brian Saperia and I were in the White Mountains recording folk music, the traditional dances played on the lute and the three-stringed Cretan lyre, and the 'rizitika', songs from the roots of the mountains which express in heroic terms the Cretans' independence and longing for liberty under Venetians, Turks and Germans. We arrived one evening in Asi Gonia, a tiny village which emerges from a sea of olives, surrounded by precipitous mountains on every side. Here we were greeted by George Psychoundakis, who was runner to Professor Dunbabin in the resistance after the German invasion of 1941. And within half an hour we were recording.

I shall not forget that night. In the village café a large tin of Californian squid was turned out on to a communal plate, and glasses were filled with the sharp, red Cretan wine which is so much more pleasant than the resinated variety drunk on the mainland. The Californian squid was incongruous: native Greek squid is delicious as I discovered in Piraeus. We had arrived in the middle of the fast which precedes the Feast of the Assumption. How squid was excepted from the list of forbidden foods I do not know. Perhaps the villagers shared vicariously in our status as 'bona fide' travellers.

We ate and drank. And then, quite suddenly, the singing began. As if by magic the room was filled with people,

children intent on us and our equipment, old men in traditional costume who had come to see this strange phenomenon. We were tired and we had not had time to check our recording apparatus. But this was an audience which could admit of no exceptions. We were caught up in the atmosphere.

Two men were sitting at the table with us,

This essay was awarded the prize
in our competition

'The Young Traveller's View'

We have also awarded an equal prize
to a second essay, 'Across America',

by Bernard Phillips,
which will be published next week

Pavlos Yperakis and the shepherd Andreas Petrakis, both veterans of the last war. Pavlos threw his great head back and began to sing, while Andreas put an arm round his shoulders as if to bind the two of them together in one performance. Their absorption was complete.



The Gorge of Samaria in the White Mountains of Crete

The lamplight flickered on their faces as they sang:

The Lord made the earth, the Lord built the heavens,
But three things in this world the Lord did not provide;
A bridge over the sea, a return from Hades
And a ladder up to heaven.

And then they were drinking again while Brian played back the tape through our inadequate loudspeaker. There was not room for everyone in the café. Those who were excluded craned in through the window to hear the playback.

They sing again:

Hitler, be not so eager to trample on Crete.
Unarmed you found her—her children in distant lands,
Fighting far away, up in Albania:

And with the same voice which has spoken for Crete throughout her turbulent history, sings the young man, wounded perhaps by the Turks:

Mother, should my friends come, should my brothers come,
Do not tell them I am dead, for they will weep.
But spread the table, give them food and wine.
Spread the table, let my brothers sing,
And in the morning, when the sun comes up,
Tell them I died.

So the words poured out, until we were almost too tired to stand up, and George took us to his home to sleep on the terrace, while the moon softened the harsh outlines of the mountains.

Our best opportunity for recording came at the wedding of Pavlos Yperakis's son. A Cretan wedding starts the day before the church service, with a plundering expedition conducted by the groom's relations, who march down to the bride's house and carry off anything they can find to the new home. This is performed in the best of spirits: at every opportunity there is a pause for food and drink. I was forced to eat sheep's entrails, piping hot, while others were swallowing whole eyes with relish. The next day shortly before the service the groom's relations set out again for the bride's house. On this occasion Andreas Petrakis led the way, his arms round two friends; and the three of them led the singing:

My bride, tree without stars,
moon without stars,
Bride of my house, where you
will go to blossom and bear fruit,
My bride, respect my friends
and they will love you.

Daphne Fielding



Cretan shepherds of the White Mountains

Hugh Farnar

The procession waited while the final touches were added to the bride's trousseau. Then she appeared, dazzling in white, with a touch of make-up for the first and last time in her life. On we wound down to the church. Inside the heat was stifling. Children played and laughed round the walls while the rest of the congregation crowded round the altar to see the couple made man and wife by the symbolic crowning with garlands. Soon it was done. The guests processed round the altar, dropped a present into a large basket, received a sugared almond, and left the church. Outside the procession formed up again, to go back to the groom's house for the feast. This time we walked along with them, recording as unobtrusively as possible:

Come outside, mother of the bridegroom, mother of the bride,

To see your precious son and golden bride.

Later in the evening we slipped out of the feast, where the guests were happily singing the 'mandinathas', or rhymed couplets, of which every Cretan has an apparently inexhaustible repertoire. We went to the café of Stelios the mayor, where two instrumentalists from Rethymnon had come to play. Twenty yards away we stopped and listened. They were dancing the Syrtos, most ancient and graceful of Greek dances. As I stood in a pool of darkness I could see the dancers silhouetted, clapping their hands and crying out. The reedy tones of the lyre pierced the stillness. Far away a dog barked. Quietly Brian laid the tape recorder on a stone wall and switched it on. The atmosphere of this tape is indescribable. Whenever I hear it I shall see those Cretans, their legs gliding and growing from the ground in the side-lit semi-circle of the dance; see Stelios too, as he tried later to dance on a wine bottle for our benefit and gashed his thumb on the shattered wreck.

One night we gave a dinner party up in our camp where the village spring emerges from under the olives and holm-oaks. George Psychoundakis, Pavlos the singer, and Stelios,

our young interpreter, were the guests. With us were two girls from Cambridge who had spent a domestic week learning to spin and bake with the women of the village. Out of slender resources (meat and fish, eggs, milk and cheese were still not allowed) they produced a wonderful meal. Munching an olive, Pavlos jokes with George. Occasionally Stelios translates. 'The girls are looking even more beautiful than when they arrived'. Brian says it is the sun, food and friendliness of Asi Gonia. The conversation warms up, the laughter increases. The bottle of wine is exhausted and we go on to retsina. Pavlos roars with delight and keeps putting out his glass for more. He circles his finger in a typical Greek gesture, throws back his head, and cries, 'Po-po-po, only a little', then drains the glass and asks again.

He does his imitation of Xan Fielding, his favourite among the English who fought here during the war. Fielding used to chain-smoke. 'Ninety a day', says Pavlos, sucking in breath through his cigarette holder, throwing away an imaginary stub and immediately lighting another. He is like a big baby. Then as the retsina mellows him he begins to philosophize. 'He is a philosopher', says Stelios, 'he says he will never forget this, never. He says that you will be great men because you "psychologize" him. You understand him and he understands you. For the girls he wishes a good marriage. He has daughters of his own and is often considering this matter'.

What can one reply? There is no need, for George is conducting an absurd mime, rolling on his back on a sleeping bag, peering into his mug, tapping it on the bottom. We have mercy and fill it up. 'Only a little', he says automatically, and then 'Bottoms Up!', one of the odd selection of phrases he learnt in the war. Smoke from the wood fire drifts overhead. Stelios does his trick of lighting a cigarette from the paraffin lamp. In the half-light faces are happy, friendly. We ask Pavlos for a mandinatha. He sings, *mezza voce*, his throat moulding the words with loving care:

Friendship is the most beautiful thing in the world.

My heart is full: my heart knows how to repay.

Our last night in Asi Gonia was a Sunday, and most of the villagers had gathered in the café of Stelios the mayor. The gramophone was playing. Some of the young men started to dance the Syrtos, a semi-circle linked by handkerchiefs so that the rhythm and pulse of the dance is passed down the line from the leader. The circle gradually snakes round. At one end the leader sets the pace, graceful, tied to the ground. It is a strange dance, popular but not quite satisfactory. There is an air of indifference about the performers which disappears entirely when they dance the wild Pendozali, warrior dance of Crete. With hands on each other's

shoulders they move round the tiny space under the plane tree. The leader leaps, slaps his boots behind his back, turns a convulsive circle in the air and falls back to pick up the measure again. The sweat stands out round his headband. Eventually he falls out exhausted and the next man takes his place: and so it goes on until each has had his turn. The Pendozali speaks for Crete as clearly as any of her songs.

Meanwhile the party has warmed up. There is a glazed look in the mayor's eye as he starts singing:

Round the high mountains, round the peaks
swirls the air,

But earth and heroism are not found every day.

On the back of a cigarette packet I scribble a couplet of my own. Stelios (the English-speaker) takes it, alters it, polishes it, and then typically hands it round saying I have written it:

My Crete, lovely island, I long to come back to
you,

And to repay this whole company of friends.

Back comes the reply at once:

The hand that wrote those words I shall fill with
gold,
Apples from Paradise I shall cut down to give
you.

Someone reminds me that we must be off early next day. So arm in arm we wind up the hill to our camp, Greeks and English together, singing as we go:

Long live Crete and her mountains, long live
London,

Long live our Venizelos, the flower of the Greeks.

Back in camp the mayor settles down on a groundsheet and is ready to continue far into the night. But he is tactfully removed, and they are gone, George, Stelios and the rest, their voices fading away into the night.

Next day we left Asi Gonia: her simple message rang in my ears as we came down to Canea and civilization:

The courage of man is great wealth;
Eat, drink and enjoy this deceitful world.

Castaway

Acorn, stick, and human bone,
Jetsam upon this reeded shore;
Observe no ritual of their own,
Require no choreographer,

But to Anatomy conform:
The acorn is a pale green eye;
Down from the shoulder, carelessly,
The stick swings like an arm.

Thus, when the ocean ebbs and flows,
Out of enforced good-fellowship
The skeleton must sway its hip,
Roll a green eye, snap the elbows.

It should occasion no surprise
That he, poor fevered castaway,
A mumbling ten-year solitary,
Buckles his spindle arms and thighs

In mime, contorts misshapen joints:
Confronted by an empty sky
To which the false stick-finger points,
Thrusts the green acorn in his eye.

JOHN BIRAM

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Travel Books

Rome: 'Time's Central City'

By HENRY REED

OF ALL BOOKS, travel books are probably the most ephemeral: usually aspiring to the condition of the instantaneous best-seller, and sometimes achieving it, they in either case have their day quickly and are done with. If a travel book outlasts the year of its publication, it will almost always be because it is a piece of marginalia in the work of a good novelist or poet; if it survives it will be as a cherishable part of that work. This year has brought a Penguin reprint of Lawrence's *Twilight in Italy*: the Italy it describes—and possibly the Bavaria of its remarkable prologue, too, for all I know—is scarcely there any more; but the book itself is alive from beginning to end, still. Why? I suppose it to be because a real writer, though he will avoid falsifying the surface of a foreign outside world, will instinctively deal only with what he can absorb into that inner world from which all writing flows. And what we have in the end will be himself-and-it: the value we set on the result will have something to do with our general trust in him—or its opposite.

So, at all events, with Lawrence. Only one of the new books about Italy that have come my way this year seems to me to promise a like endurance, and for like reasons. Miss Elizabeth Bowen's *A Time in Rome* (Longmans, 21s.), is distinctly part of a larger whole which one does not expect to forget. It is the exact antithesis of most travel books. It is magnificently unillustrated, for one thing; for another, its author is explicitly anxious not to be of help to any other visitor. It is essentially a book to be read away from Rome, not in it. It has further negative virtues; there is nothing about the unremitting winsomeness of the natives; there are none of those maudlin conversation-pieces with which even the sincerest are wont to bedizen their reminiscences; and none of the authoritative inclusiveness of the dug-in expatriate ('Gino smiled, as no one outside Florence knows how to smile; and all Florentines of course have perfect teeth'). Miss Bowen sees selectively, and with adequate passion; she is not an indiscriminate watcher; she is not a camera (nor, in point of fact, was Mr. Isherwood). If she tells you anything about Rome, she gives you a recognizable part of herself with it:

Rome's staid residential districts I did remember, but not their extensiveness or, on me, effect. Latin equivalent of the Victorian, they bespeak a sort of bilious prosperity. The stucco of the stand-offish, secretive houses has darkened from ivory to buff, buff to mustard; their surrounds are metallic evergreen gardens. Sometimes,

inside a railing, sounds the costive drip of a fountain not quite turned off. The palm trees look stuffy and un-Southern; any windows not masked by venetian shutters exude gloom through their hangings of clotted lace—not only is it impossible to see in, it must be all but impossible to see out. I eyed the electric bells

how do this ourselves. The making of a book is her real concern, and I enjoy recalling its shape even at the risk of making it seem overschematic. The first chapter is for obvious reasons called 'The Confusion'. The second is 'The Long Day': at once the feeling of the modern day in Rome, its centre a monstrous siesta, and also the long clear day of the Caesars. Miss Bowen acquires her learning on the spot, and occasionally, like King Magnus in *The Apple Cart*, she gives the impression of a slight ironic wink as she unrolls the official pronouncements. Thirdly, the night: her own sleepful nights as against the insomnia of the ancients; and also the night that the Dark Ages form in our imagination. She emerges into the fairly raffish day of the Renaissance with Cellini as an appropriate companion. Fourthly, 'The Smile'—the smile of the Roman weather, but also of Livia, the wife of Augustus; and the gentle or rhetorical tourists of the nineteenth century, and the sparkling baroque of the sixteenth. Lastly, 'The Set Free': at once the Risorgimento and the advent of St. Paul; the regular liberations from the city into the 'environs' that everyone in Rome today seeks; and her own departure.

Non-committal the beginning of the book: but highly committed the end, and the reader probably with it.

Two days later I left, taking the afternoon train to Paris. As before, I had too much baggage to go by air. Such a day, when it does come, has nothing particular about it. Only from the train as it moved out did I look at Rome. Backs of houses I had not ever seen before wavered into mists, stinging my eyes. My darling, my darling, my darling. Here we have no abiding city.

I have read Miss Bowen's book twice, some of it oftener. It is, for me, some sign of the book's completeness in itself that it does not revive, or even much recall, my own various past affections for the city. Here is a Rome, perfectly created, and separate now from the city itself. It is possible to feel that Miss Bowen has held a lot in reserve. Part of the poetry of the book comes from its deliberate avoidance of dialogue, personal encounter, the matter of fiction; and it is with a faint, and one hopes not impertinent, stirring of anticipation, that one remembers Miss Bowen observing, somewhere in the book: 'Rome demands its novelist'.

Other books about Italy which have appeared recently include: *Rome Revealed*, by Aubrey Menen (Thames and Hudson, £4 4s.); *Gardens of Rome* by Gabriel Faure (Kaye, 35s.); *Venice*, by James Morris (Faber, 30s.).



A view of the Vatican gardens from the Pinacoteca

From 'Gardens of Rome'

in their polished circles, wondering who had ever the nerve to press them: few or none are signs of coming-and-going—are the young always out, perhaps, the old always in?

Characteristically self-possessed, when she arrives in Rome on page one, Miss Bowen first finishes the detective-story she has been reading on the train. Even after this there is no eager throwing open of windows on to the magic of the well-remembered city, etc. It is night, she goes out to dinner, naturally taking a book, to a restaurant where it is clearly 'uncouth' to read. From such non-committal beginnings, and with an artistry in opening up an atmosphere as seductive as that of her novels, she embarks herself and us on her three months of winter-to-spring in Rome. Gradually one begins to see that this book, like all Miss Bowen's work, is about a form of love. Its growth, its indefinable course, she is not concerned to chart. We some-



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The English Scene

WRITING ABOUT 'the English scene' must be one of the largest minor industries in this country, but one rarely comes across a book worth buying and keeping. I had begun to believe that there was no solution to the problem of producing a good up-to-date travel-book for such a richly detailed country as England, that one could only take an old Murray and a new Pevsner (where available), and hope not to miss anything good. Even this was a pious hope, for one knows that many towns, such as Great Yarmouth and Southampton, have never received their rightful praise in print.

Norman Scarfe's *Suffolk* in the Shell Guide series (Faber, 12s. 6d.) shows that one should never despair. As in all topographical series, the quality of the several Guides varies enormously. One—it shall be nameless—is very bad. Scarfe's *Suffolk* is superlatively good. It is complete, it is dead accurate—as accurate as anyone humanly can be; and every one of the attractive photographs adds something to the text. There are long articles on the larger towns such as Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds, and an apt comment on even the smallest rural parish. Norman Scarfe's writing is both sharp and affectionate. He sets out to explain 'how places came to be as they are'. He is historical but not antiquarian. This is just what a good travel-book should be, but one had given up hoping for it. If a foreign visitor expressed a wish to explore a part of England for himself, mostly unspoilt, quiet (forget the airfields now), and friendly, I would hand him Scarfe's *Suffolk* and Postgate's *Good Food Guide* and feel confident that he was going to return home with an enhanced opinion of our country, indeed with a deep affection for it.

There are places in England, such as Broadway and Clovelly, that are so publicized that the sensitive traveller moves rapidly in the opposite direction. Torquay is another of these places that one tends to write off as impossibly overpraised and overcrowded: but for nine months of the year it is neither. Its coastal scenery is still incredibly beautiful, and it is also one of the most appealing of Victorian towns. It is the great merit of Percy Russell's *A History of Torquay* (published by the Torquay Natural History Society, 21s.) that he explains precisely how it came to be like this. Local histories rarely make good travel-books, but this one does—partly be-

cause Torquay is practically all the creation of the last 140 years (though there are some medieval bits) and partly because of Mr. Russell's careful topographical treatment of streets, terraces, and even individual villas. This is the kind of book one looks for on fetching up in some foreign town, the sort of historical guide-book that explains how and when the town came to be as it is. First the preliminary exploration to get the feel of the place and to find the book. Then the reading in a wine-garden (when will this be possible in England? Isn't there one enterprising town? What about the gardens of the Tudor House Museum in Southampton for a start?). Then the second exploration, detailed and informed, of every hole and corner. Russell's *Torquay* is this sort of book, provided one abandons all hope of using it in the three summer months.

Geoffrey Grigson's *English Excursions* (Country Life, 30s.) needs no reviewer's praise. Everything he writes about landscapes, towns, and buildings enhances our understanding of them. A few excursions take him outside this country; but mostly he writes about ancient 'atmospheric' places like Bradwell-on-Sea, Dunwich in winter, Grimes Graves, deserted lime-kilns, with a painter's eye and a historian's mind. He quotes Constable with approval, that he never saw an ugly thing, such is the transforming power of light; though the modern vileness of the city of Gloucester tries him almost beyond endurance. As a describer of places Geoffrey Grigson is in a class by himself.

The best of the other books are practical. A new edition of Batsford and Fry's *The Cathedrals of England* (Batsford, 18s.), first published twenty-six years ago, now revised by Bryan Little, and still the best handbook. *Britain's National Parks*, edited by Harold Abrahams (Country Life, 25s.), covers the ten parks so far designated, with an expert writing on each.

Coupled with it, the third individual Park guide-book to appear, *Peak District*, edited by Patrick Monkhouse and beautifully produced (H.M.S.O., 5s.). The National Park Guides set a very high standard in guide-books.

Lastly, a travel-book of a special kind—*The Coast of England and Wales in Pictures*, by J. A. Steers (Cambridge, 30s.). This is much more than a pretty picture-book. There are 167 fine photographs, but also a geological introduction, a commentary on the illustrations, and some clear maps, which make it altogether the best book on the subject for the general reader. It is rare to find geology and physical geography made intelligible and even appealing to the non-specialist, but Professor Steers succeeds admirably.

W. G. HOSKINS



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Other recent books on the English scene include *The Ancient Road to Canterbury*, by Robert H. Goodsall (Constable, 21s.); *The Isles of Scilly*, by G. Forrester Matthews (George Ronald, 30s.); *A History of Yorkshire*, by W. E. Tate and F. B. Singleton (Darwen Finlayson, 16s.); *The New Forest*, a symposium (Dent: Galley Press, 30s.).

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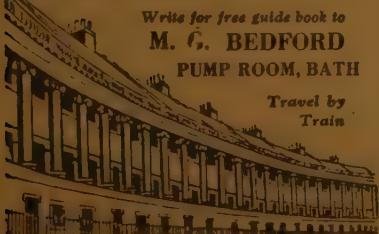
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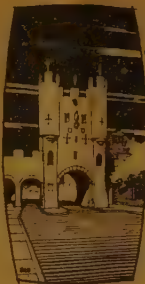
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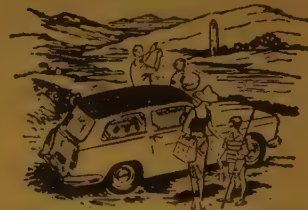
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This World of Wales

DAVID VEREY'S EXCELLENT little *Shell Guide to Mid Wales* (Faber, 12s. 6d.) has run into trouble. Some Welsh worthies complain that the author does Wales a disservice, that he misrepresents ancient towns, that his book will keep tourists away. Two or even three people have said they will not use Shell products any more. This ought to help the book's circulation. And it is not every day that stupidity is of such assistance to wit, erudition and style. Mr. Verey is of course very much to blame, since he refuses to be mediocre. His local knowledge is quite extraordinary, and so is his zest for fine monuments of the past. But he does not play the game: he describes architectural disasters too. He sees buildings that are hideous, so he says they are hideous. He finds country towns that are dead, and he says they are dead. As every true Welshman knows, there are no hideous buildings in Wales, there are no dead towns. The intrusion of a foreigner who will not tolerate the intolerable is apt to seem more explosive than a sudden glimpse of truth should be. Mr. Verey's book will do more to attract visitors to Wales than a hundred smooth hand-outs.

If we can forget the traffic on the roads, Wales is an enchanting country. Come to Conway from the east at nightfall and look across the estuary at the walled town and the threatening hills behind. Stand on the wide beach at Aberffraw. Take the road over the Berwyn range and come down to Llangynog and the church of Pennant-Melangell. Visit the breathless harbour of Newquay, the astounding rocks at Worm's Head in the Gower. 'Lovely the woods, waters, meadows, combes, vales. All the air things wear that build this world of Wales'. But Hopkins never saw the rash of holiday caravans creeping across Wales like something sinister out of Ray Bradbury, nor did he know the waves of affluent British workmen with nothing to leave but their litter, their noise, and their beautiful money. This is the process of elimination for the Welsh as a culturally different people.

Native Welsh culture still exists, but it is thin on the ground and is getting thinner. Poets are still respected in some parts, where literature is obstinately an aspect of life. I know a man who won the bardic crown at the National Eisteddfod a few years ago. He happened to call at a village shop in Merioneth, outside his usual territory. He was immediately recognized as Blank the Poet by the schoolboy son of the house. It turned out that the boy had the poet's photograph pinned up in his bedroom. The boy wrote poetry himself and was also keen on football. It may no longer be typical that a schoolboy knows how to use the strict metres of medieval court poets and that he should want a modern poet as his pin-up, but it is still something to be proud of and to want to keep. The coaches from (and to) Birmingham thunder through the village street. Intelligent

and understanding visitors are welcome in any home, but these are few in comparison with the hordes of trippers who treat Welsh traditions and the living language as so much 'bloody cheek' on the part of the natives. Meanwhile, Wales itself has no shortage of local politicians who assure the nation that tourism is vital to the Welsh economy. Their roots are about as deep as those of the farmers whose main interest seems to be the cultivation of an annual crop of caravans. Cupidity is never at a loss to find ways of calling itself wise husbandry.

IDRIS PARRY

Shades of Green

IRELAND (THAT IS, the Republic) continues to fascinate the English, who in their turn hypnotize the Irish. Here is a true attraction of opposites, for Irish and English expectations and assumptions have almost nothing in common, and Ireland, unlike England, has escaped the infecting touch of the European proletariat. These contrasts have produced some national tensions but on the personal level sympathy and warmth are as genuine and tangible as ever. The enthusiastic crowds who turned out at Birr to greet Princess Margaret were cheering a young Englishwoman who had made a love-match, not a scion of the English crown which, whatever it may mean to the English, has in Ireland been nothing more exalted than the traditional symbol of oppression.

Despite geographical propinquity Englishmen are horribly ignorant of Irish history and often find themselves at a disadvantage amongst a people whose endemic disease is incipient elephantiasis of the memory. This danger can now be painlessly avoided by reading Mme

Bourniquel's excellent little book *Ireland* (translated by John Fisher, Vista Books, 6s.), which is not a guide-book in any ordinary sense of the word but a background sketch of Irish history, politics, religion, and art. Scholarly and sprightly, written with a serene and sympathetic detachment, it should materially enrich a visit to Ireland, whether it be for the first or fiftieth time.

Dublin is likely to be the starting-point of an Englishman's Irish holiday, and what better place is there to open an Irish exploration than in this fading beautiful Georgian city with its obstinately Victorian heart? Here by the peat-sodden waters of the Liffey (Dubh-Linn means literally black sea), and amid the encircling mountains, English nonconformity has found its last and apparently safe retreat. The zealous tourist will find much of interest to occupy him, from a tour of the Guinness factory (ending satisfactorily with some free samples), to a visit to St. Michan's Church, in whose mysterious vaults no body corrupts, where the Earls of Kenmare lie cheaply embalmed but expensively encased in plush coffins studded with gilt nails, and where the only living inhabitants are the black spiders who keep their numbers in suitable check by decorously eating one another.

By day Dublin has attractions enough, but by night it is another story. Night clubs do not exist and a few pink gins at the Pearl Bar surrounded by thirsty and loquacious literary men make a poor substitute. Even a visit to the cinema is difficult, since Ireland has so far been spared the joys of television (although it is on the way) and the waiting queues are formidable. Theatres are few and the plays not very good, the gutted Abbey symbolically represents the end of the great tradition. The Irish myths were exhausted by Yeats and Synge, and the 'troubles' by Sean O'Casey, and no one has the talent or the boldness to make use of the rich satirical material offered by Ireland's Jan-senist middle class or power-wielding clergy. The Abbey, long before it was burnt down, was a sad setting for a dreary ritual of revivals and contemporary kitchen comedies. Yeats's terrible beauty has been stillborn. Only the heroic efforts of Lord Longford who relentlessly presses the classics on apathetic audiences and of his neighbour Micheál Mac Liammóir save the Irish theatre from total extinction. They indulge their hobbies but do not create a national theatre.

Dublin is an excellent starting-place, but fortified by visits to her first-rate restaurants ('Jammets' and 'The Russell') the traveller must leave the capital to find the real Ireland. The centre of an alien ascendancy has never symbolized Ireland's true self and aspirations (save for a gory and glorious few days in 1916), and the Irish soul must be sought in the countryside. Institutions have not welded Ireland together but intellectual and spiritual influences and affinities preserved by poetry learnt on the family hearth. The Irish soul must be snared in the Wicklow Mountains, or on the Connemara moors,



Nantyglo from Brynmawr

From 'Shell Guide to Mid Wales'

or far off in northern Donegal. Everywhere, the hunter will be met by different shades of green, the gentle legacy of a climate whose damp has destroyed the houses and shaped the character of the people in a way not even the English could emulate. The Irish countryside is sad and mysterious, imbued with the sufferings and sorrows of Ireland, a perpetual contrast and rebuke to England's smiling and tamed landscape. When one stands on the Rock of Cashel in the shadow of Cormack's twelfth-century chapel and looks out over the bare green fields in the twilight as the rooks caw and wheel overhead one comes nearest to catching one's prey. Only on the Arran islands off the coast of Galway, where life has remained unchanged for centuries, does one feel nearer to Ireland's historic past.

Yet Ireland is changing too, and, although reluctantly, is preparing to join the twentieth century. Her Prime Minister, Mr. Sean Lemass, is a hard-headed realist, not a green-spectacled romantic, and is leading a drive to improve agriculture and stimulate industry to halt Ireland's lethal tide of emigration. At Shannon a tax-free industrial estate is the airport's answer to the obsolescence threatened by the jet age, German factories as well as jaunting cars can be found at Killarney; and Irish railways are not only running on time but almost paying their way. But the visitor need not fear that the old Ireland will vanish away, and best of all it can easily be seen by road. Ireland is a motorist's paradise with miles of well-kept roads with scarcely a car to be seen. The only hazards are itinerant cattle, pigs and sheep. But, after all, one expects such things in Ireland.

NORMAN ST. JOHN-STEVAS

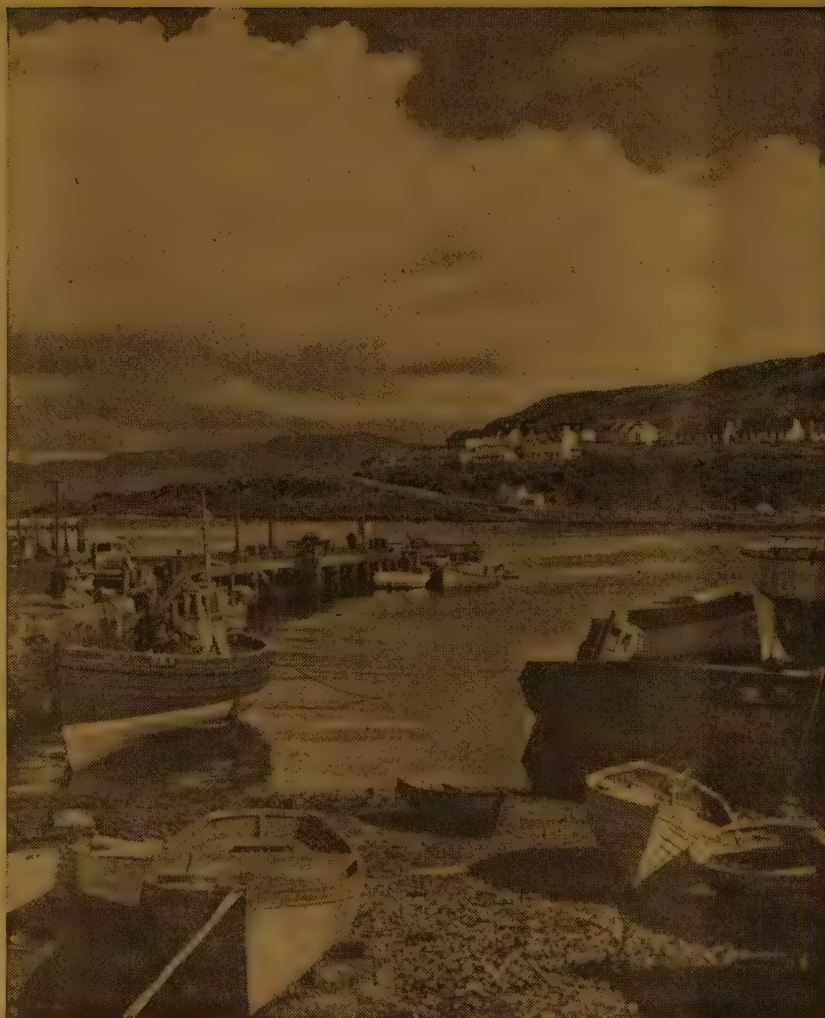
Discovering Ulster

ARE MOST COUNTRIES alike in that the active, quick-spoken, practical people live in the top half and the more easy-going in the south? Certainly Lille and Marseilles, County Down and Kerry illustrate this—well, not theory, rather one of those speculations which amuse a traveller.

Rivalled only by the Pennines, the railway journey from Dublin to Belfast is surely one of the most beautiful in these islands. 'Intonationally' and historically 'the north' begins at Drogheda. Oswald Blakeston, determined in three weeks to discover Ulster and avoid political controversy, tactfully slid in by aeroplane, then talked, motored, inquired, used his eyes and ears, took back to London a full notebook or two and produced *Thank You Now: an exploration of Ulster* (Blond, 25s.).

He is excellent when suggesting atmosphere, for instance, in Downpatrick:

We breakfasted in a room where the sideboard sagged under its load of tea cosies, and the



Mallaig

From 'Scotland's Splendour'

waitress hovered about us to find out where we'd come from, where we were going. This sort of curiosity is not meant in any ill-mannered way: it is simple peasant curiosity and can be satisfied by a few simple statements . . . 'And hadn't she heard other people from England say what a joy it was to motor in Northern Ireland where the roads were not clogged up with other cars and great lorries, like tea-leaves in a sink'.

Or changes in weather:

In the morning the sky was grey as if filled with stone dust, and we felt depressed when we got into the car. A few large drops which might have been blown from a pea-shooter, were falling on the best Sunday suit of a child who was running down the street making a noise like a sea-gull. A gnarled old gentleman, with a jack-in-the-box face, sprung up in front of us and skidded round a corner on his bike. We were travelling north again, and the small loughs were being fed by drops.

On a fine day, along the Antrim coast, the explorers moved under that hard-edged, unsoftened colour and light, which seems as if refracted from snow masses thousands of miles away, and the description of men at Downhill, not dodging their work, but watching for a moment or two the sun disappear, epitomizes the unassuming awareness of these counties.

Although Mr. Blakeston has not heard the terrifying vitality of the drums beating through the neat streets of town and village, carrying elation or fear into every childhood, he has caught much of what is best in the Ulster environment.

PATRICIA HUTCHINS

My Heart's in the Highlands

*Omnis Scotia (aut Alba) in tribus partibus divisa est—viz. the Highlands and Islands, the Central Lowlands and the Southern Uplands. Or so we were taught at school. But, judging from the books I have been reading recently, there seems to have been a merging recently of the Lowlands and the Uplands so that even such well-informed writers as Mr. John Herries McCulloch in his *The Charm of Scotland* (Oldbourne, 18s.), are surprised by the presence of hills anywhere south of the Highland Line. This change will require a considerable reorientation on the part of our geologists since the Uplands lie south of a fault line which runs across the country roughly from Girvan in the west to Dunbar in the east. And so would any geographical change in Scotland—no matter how small. For Scotland is the geologist's paradise and the geological student's nightmare. Within its small limits, the majority of geological strata find representatives and practically every type of structure is present—syncline, monocline, anticline, faults, ring formations, etc., etc. Both the igneous and sedimentary rocks have been con-*

torted almost beyond recognition by the stresses of hundreds of millennia. The Moine and the Dalradian schists bear witness to the metamorphic power of tremendous pressures or incredible heat while the Lewisian gneisses, with their archaean structure still surviving in them, vouch for the permanence of rock.

But, though it was originally, and remains primarily, a land of rocks, Scotland has supported a population of human beings for a very considerable time. Professor Stuart Piggott has said that 'the only satisfactory evidence of the first colonists of Scotland dates from little, if at all, before 2500 B.C.' and, while the intervening four and a half thousand years may seem a short time to the archaeologist and nothing at all to the astronomer, they represent a great deal of time in terms of the human life. Even allowing the average lifetime throughout the period to be taken as forty-five years (and this is a very generous allowance when we consider the situation of primitive man) at least a hundred lifetimes have passed since man first set foot in Scotland. How, then, has man managed in this jungle of rock? What effect have the hard stones of his native heath had on him?

It would be pleasant to say that Miss Janet R. Glover has answered these questions in *The Story of Scotland* (Faber, 21s.): pleasant, but impossible, though she has written a well-balanced and reasonably accurate political history. She makes no attempt, for example, to fit the Highlander into her work. He pops up whenever he affects the court in Dunfermline or Edinburgh. Thus, the very people who lived



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nearest the rocks and tore a living out of them are dismissed with hardly a mention. Similarly, though with more excuse, Mr. Ian Finlay, in *The Lothians* (Collins, 18s.), concentrates on the inhabitants of the lush Lowlands. And, when Mr. McCulloch at last gets round to considering Highlanders he builds up a myth of huge long-lived people, though the average height of the Highland male in 1760 was of the order of five feet, four inches, and his expectation of life at birth was about thirty years. These figures were largely due to over-population. The sparse land was being systematically maltreated and impoverished. There simply was not enough food to go round and practically everyone, including many lairds, lived on a diet of porridge, eked out with a little milk. This, though in many ways deficient, was at least a viable amount of nourishment and it was the change from this to the tea and white bread of the cities which accounted for much of the harm done by the Industrial Revolution to the descendants of these eighteenth-century crofters.

Yet it is to the Highlands that the traveller to Scotland will inevitably return. He will certainly find no problem of over-population nowadays. Rather the reverse. For the great exodus which began with the Forty-five and continued with the evictions is still in progress. There are numerous islands all round the west coast which once, like St. Kilda, supported thriving communities and which are now uninhabited unless, as at St. Kilda, a task force of the R.A.F. has descended on them to build a missile station or a radar listening post. But St. Kilda can no more be taken as representative of the Highlands than an igloo as the type of Canadian architecture. It is too far away, to begin with, too difficult to reach, and too unusual. It contains, for example, the highest cliff in the British Isles, a field-mouse the size of a small rat and a unique breed of sheep. I think of it as a fascinating collection of islands which I must visit sometime and I am grateful to Messrs. Kenneth Williamson and J. Morton Boyd for their painstaking account of it in *St. Kilda Summer* (Hutchinson, 25s.), but I doubt if many will be compelled by their work to follow in their footsteps. Nor would such a result be entirely desirable. The wild animals in St. Kilda will have quite enough to contend with in the men of the R.A.F. without being pestered by tourists with cameras or, still worse, with guns.

But the men of St. Kilda, those who went into exile in 1930, had grown up with these cliffs and they could perform on them feats of climbing which would daunt Sir Edmund Hillary with all his apparatus. It is a small point but a well validated one, and it shows how the people of Scotland could adapt themselves to the rocks among which they lived. If, on the much more complex mainland, we could establish a similar connexion between geology and race we should have gone a long way toward elucidating the mystery of evolution as it actively affects us, the conscious human beings who are able to learn—a little at least—from their fathers' mistakes.

BURNS SINGER

Other recent books on Scotland include *Down the Clyde*, by Jock House (Chambers, 8s. 6d.); *Scotland's Splendour*, by various hands, edited by J. B. Forman (Collins, 35s.); *Knowing Scotland*, by 'Jain' (The World's Work, 15s.); *Scottish Abbeys* (H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 7s. 6d.) and *The Scottish Castle* (Nelson, 42s.), both by Stewart Cruden.



Manhattan by night

One of 261 photographs in 'The World in Pictures' (Odhams, 30s.)

Silence and Eloquence in America

RUSKIN ONCE EXPLAINED that he could not visit America because it was a land without castles. This, like so many of Ruskin's pronouncements, was silly and wrong-headed, but it alludes to a truth of some importance. To European eyes many of the great cities of the United States appear strangely incoherent. We seek, and seek in vain, the acropolitian nexus, the seat of temporal or spiritual power which dominates, adorns and federates the European townscape. America, in her political wisdom, has divided power wherever she can. The great town is seldom a State Capital and the capital itself is, in consequence, a sort of tadpole—all head and no tail—sometimes, as in the case of Annapolis, an altogether charming little place but, necessarily and intentionally, unimpressive. The President himself is excluded from the great seats of commercial power and relegated to what is, after all, no more than a super-tadpole—the purely administrative city of Washington.

Kings and theocrats being discarded, the centre of urban life falls into the hands of the businessman, the hotel-keeper and the retailer; these, although they rise to their opportunities with more vigour and imagination than is usual on this side of the Atlantic, are by their very nature averse to the kind of unanimous social effort that results in town planning. They achieve coherence only when it is forced upon them by geography. Then, indeed, the results are breathtaking. Looking down Lexington Avenue from 71st street on one of those fine days when the crowded towers of Manhattan waver in the heat, the spectator will feel no need for any established authority to impose a central or culminating edifice; indeed he may fairly wonder whether such a thing could be achieved. Or again, drive up and over the lunatic, switchback gradients of San Francisco at that hour when the neon ideograms of Chinatown burst like fire crackers beneath your feet and you will not ask for any dominant plan to contain the whole. But, in cities less tightly bound by nature, commerce spreads itself in aimless freedom. The European looks continually for that which the regular

pattern of the streets insistently demands but which he will never find: the Signoria, the Cathedral Square, the palace, temple or spacious waterfront. As we approach the centre, the town becomes more tightly packed, more congested and more animated, then it recedes and tapers off as it started, in rubbish tips, filling stations and rows of used cars. It seems, in effect, always to be making a point but never coming to it. And today, when almost any American feels naked when not clothed in an automobile, even this amorphous centricity is being destroyed. The great store and the great hotel need more parking space than they can afford; the distributors and the caterers move therefore to the perimeter, to the motel and the supermarket. If administrative business follows suit the American town will soon become a circular conurbation around an expiring nucleus until, finally, the centre becomes so deserted that business will be drawn back into the vacuum that it has created. From this it may at least be deduced that the traveller in the United States should not start with too many hard and fast ideas of what constitutes a city; he must, however, also learn that America is too vast to be covered by any generalization and, in considering those which I have ventured upon this page, he may at once point to Boston as an exception to my rules.

Boston is, indeed, a capital city, a hub surmounted by a gilded dome. At every turn the cockney is reminded of his home. Boston's streets and squares have the irregularity, the inconsequence and the traffic problems of London. The beauty of her architecture (which is very considerable) is manifestly related to that of Old England and, when she ventures upon lofty pomposity, her faults are very close to ours; she greets the stranger with a warmth, a *politesse du coeur*, notable even in America, pays him the subtle compliment of providing a public transport system which makes our own seem positively glossy, and even goes so far as to exhibit a few real live beggars.

If Boston is kind to those who come from that

which it here seems appropriate to call 'the mother country' she also has a strong affinity with a more distant East. Boston and China have been united by the commercial enterprise of New England for many generations and now, when American art is so deeply involved with the calligraphy of the Orient, the connection is of particular interest. It is natural therefore that Mr. Chiang Yee, who, in his quiet way has recorded so much of the Western world, should have found, as *The Silent Traveller in Boston* (Methuen, 30s.), a grateful subject for his pen and brush. Of these discreet implements his pen is, I think, to be preferred, it is assisted by that delicate, but always perceptible, element of poetry and poetical irony which seems to be the property of every educated celestial and which, as in the present instance, gives a pleasing relish to ideas and sentiments which, coming from a Westerner, might appear decidedly banal. Mr. Chiang Yee is not so much a traveller as a resident; he has had the time and the opportunity (which his readers will envy) to inhale, savour and familiarize himself with the atmosphere of Boston and of Cambridge, to observe the shapes of the trees in Harvard Yard, the behaviour of the birds on Boston Common, the conformation of rocks at Marblehead.

Miss Emily Kimbrough, in *It Gives Me Great Pleasure* (Heinemann, 18s.), has been less fortunate; where Mr. Yee can be silent she must speak; talking, she covers the continent and there is never time to consider a tree or a stone, let alone a duck or a pigeon. There is always another train to be caught, another hotel bedroom to be occupied, another elaborate meal to be consumed in company with another hospitable committee of ladies and yet another lecture to be given. Those who have made that long trek from platform to platform across the States will no doubt be able to confirm her terrifying account of the dangers of the journey; it bears the horrible stamp of truth. She has, moreover, a graceful, easy way of being funny about her own misadventures and, although she never so much as hints at it, one divines that her fluency as a writer makes her an eminently successful lecturer. Her book has, also, a certain historical interest, for she must be one of the last Americans to make a habit of travelling long distances by train.

QUENTIN BELL

Down Mexico Way

NO ONE WHO is susceptible to the magic of names can fail to wish to visit Mexico. Cities called Oaxaca or Orizaba, provinces called Chihuahua or Yucatan, and the incredible mountain called Popocatepetl, have a lure that would never be resisted, were it not that the country in which they are to be found is far away, and the journey from Britain long and costly. It is our loss. Mexico is remote and strange; but once the traveller has arrived there he need not fear inconvenience or discomfort. Tourism is one of the country's chief industries. There are good roads, though the railways are a trifle capricious; there are pleasant hotels; the authorities are kind and courteous and often overwhelmingly hospitable and generous; and nature and art provide spectacles for every taste. It is true that the vast majority of the tourists have come from the United States and do not always represent the most agreeable type of



Cholula: the sanctuary of Los Remedios, at the summit of the Aztec Pyramid, seen from across the domed roof of the Capilla Real

From 'Mexico'

yanqui. But the British traveller thereby acquires a useful rarity value.

The fascination of Mexico lies in its strangeness and beauty and in its infinite variety. Geographically, historically, and artistically it is not one country but many. Within its vast boundaries there are many types of scenery. There are the great plains of the high central plateau, somewhat reminiscent of central Spain or Anatolia, but on a grander scale. There are the lush forests of the coast, with bright birds flashing against the dark green foliage. There are the fertile fields and gardens that lie between the two, all too few for the country's economy. There are magnificent wooded mountains; indeed, I know of no road more splendid than that which winds from Mexico City to Morelia through forests and over passes ten thousand feet above sea-level, with fantastical peaks and ranges stretching on either side as far as the eye can see. There are the green, limestone plains and shimmering lagoons of Yucatan, and the stark ridges of Lower California. The climate is as varied as the scenery. Between the rarified air of the Capital, with its blazing days and often icy nights, and the damp heat of Vera Cruz on the shores of the Gulf, there is no resemblance; and the shores of the Gulf themselves are changed when a cruel *norte* blows, with cold, driving rain; and the thermometer drops twenty degrees. Historically there are the same sharp distinctions. Pre-Spanish Mexico, colonial Mexico, nineteenth-century

Mexico and the revolutionary Mexico of the last fifty years might all be different countries; and each has left its separate mark on the Mexicans and their achievements and their art.

It is not surprising that the Mexicans are difficult to know. Nature is beautiful but not very friendly, with its volcanoes and earthquakes and sudden storms. It is full of hostile gods who must be placated. The blood sacrifices of Aztec times, which shock us when we read of them in our comfortable homes, seem less unwarranted when we are on the spot. History has not been very benevolent. If many Mexicans seem to combine the touchy pride of the Spaniard with the suspicion of the Indian, we need not wonder; we should rather wonder that the Mayan peoples of Yucatan are still so gentle and friendly. The wise traveller moves tactfully, remembering, for instance, that the colonial period is out of fashion. Before he speaks of its art, he should admire the monuments that date from pre-Spanish times or the works of the present day. It is not a hard task. One may not see much beauty in Aztec art, except in a few small carvings; but the ruined cities of the Mayans, such as Palenque or Uxmal, cannot but move one. Nor can anyone fail to be impressed by the frescoes of Ribera or Orozco, even if they may not please; while the new University City of Mexico is certainly among the most exciting architectural works of our time. Having paid his tribute there, the traveller can then pass on to the wonders of the colonial age. The

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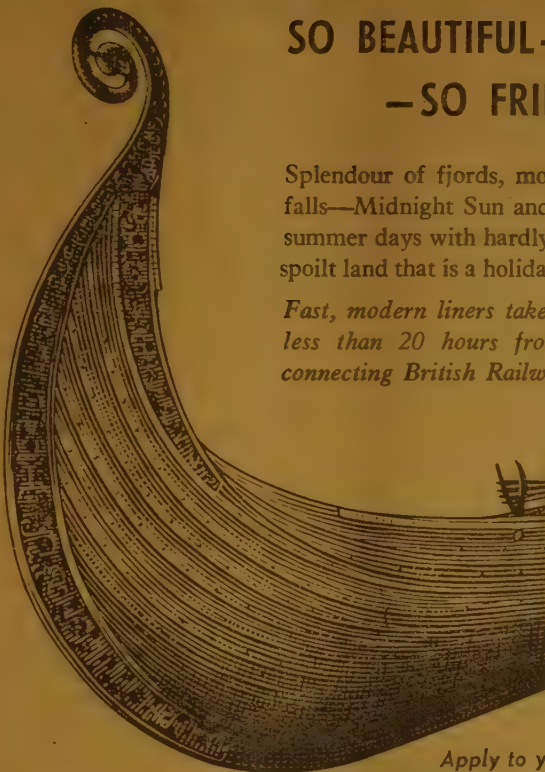
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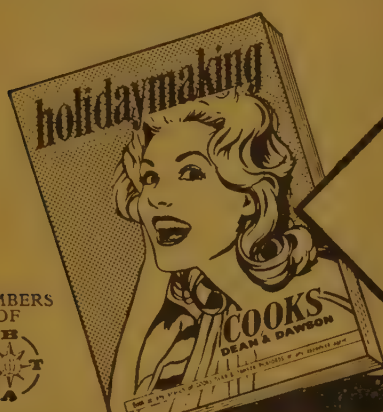
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Mexicans ought not to resent them; for the characteristic charm of such cities as Guanajuato or Morelia, Puebla or Oaxaca, lies in the interpretations given by indigenous masons and carvers to the Herrerian or baroque styles imported from Spain.

The traveller's chief difficulty is that there is so much to see, and, on the one hand, vast distances to traverse, and, on the other, so many sights almost or actually superimposed on others. And all the while there is the fascination exercised by the Mexican peoples, remote, almost hostile and haunted by a death-wish, then suddenly melting into easy gaiety and limitlessly generous when once friendship has been given; and with one trait which remains as a lasting memory. Even the conquistadors were struck by the Mexican love of gardens. There are gardens, beautifully and devotedly tended, in the cities and in the countryside, wherever the harsh soil allows. To the Mexican Paradise should be a true paradise, a park full of trees and flowers; and he does his best to bring such a paradise around him on this earth. The withdrawn, patient faces of the Mexicans will be remembered against a background of brilliant flowers.

STEVEN RUNCIMAN

Recent books dealing with Mexico include the following: *Nagel's Mexico Travel Guide* (Frederick Muller, 42s.); *Hidden Cities of Middle America*, by Winifred Pitkin (William MacLellan, 21s.); *Mexico*, by Erico Verissimo (Macdonald, 30s.); *Sons of the Shaking Earth*, by Eric R. Wolf (Cambridge, for University of Chicago Press, 40s.).

Russian Journeys

'God, how wonderful to be a foreigner in Moscow these days!'

'Confidentially, tell me, what do Americans do in a hula hoop?'

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These remarks by Russians to visitors are recorded respectively by Marvin L. Kalb in *Eastern Exposure* (Gollancz, 21s.), Harrison E. Salisbury in *To Moscow and Beyond* (Michael Joseph, 25s.), and Eileen Bigland in *Russia Has Two Faces* (Odhams, 21s.). The traveller in Soviet territory must still climb some formidable mental barriers to make contact with his hosts. The latest books by returned voyagers will give the climber a good deal of help toward understanding.

He will also need, of course, patience and imagination of his own, if he is not to be discouraged by the frustrations that dog any attempt to stray from approved paths. Although tourism in Russia is now big business, it is still in some respects nobody's business. More foreigners arrive every year, more hotels are being built, more routes permitted. Yet, quite apart from the lingering secretiveness and the periodic witch-hunting campaigns apparently meant to make Russians wary of foreigners—campaigns which, happily, have only a limited effect—the visitor is also up against many in-

stances of the authorities' indifference and their entanglement in inter-departmental red tape. For example, street maps of some Soviet cities are now published, but it is evidently nobody's business to see that they meet the demand; sometimes they are freely on sale, sometimes unobtainable for months on end, and at all times inadequate. The same is true of road maps, although tourists are now encouraged to bring their own cars, and in certain circumstances can hire self-drive cars. If this reflects fear of espionage, its odd result is that the visitor innocently seeking some monastery or rural museum can easily stray into unsought and alarming proximity to a bomber base.

The pocket guide-books on *Moscow* and *Leningrad* issued by the Soviet Foreign Languages Publishing House (Central Books, 3s. 6d. each) illustrate this transitional state of affairs. With photographs, pleasant marginal sketches, and much interesting information, these are helpful companions for the wanderer. But their maps are almost useless, and, in the absence of any index, one must thumb right through the pages to find, say, the section on the Hermitage. May this hopeful beginning be followed by some more serious effort to consider the visitor's real needs. Mention may also be made here of Nikolai Mikhailov's *Glimpses of the USSR* (also from Central Books, 6s.), well translated by Ralph Parker and Valentina Scott and copiously illustrated, a popular economic geography which, I would say, if taken with the necessary grain of salt, has

something to offer to the intending traveller too.

One of those who has made the trip by car is George Mair. He went, however, no further than Moscow, and talked mostly to his dogged interpreter-guide. So slender an experience needs a bit of bulking out to make a book, and Dr. Mair has bulked out *Destination Moscow* (Herbert Jenkins, 21s.) with too much determinedly humorous dialogue with the young lady from Intourist, who by his account was quite the most appalling of her species; but there are some moments of real humour, and some useful tips for other drivers on the road to Russia.

A more venturesome car journey has been entertainingly described by Michael Alexander in *Offbeat in Asia: A Journey Along the Russian Frontier* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 21s.). One cannot, of course, drive along the Russian side of the frontier, and this was a three-month journey along the outside, through northern Turkey and Persia to Afghanistan—with difficulty enough in approaching the border zones in each country. The author shared his lurching Land Rover with a hardy and charming girl named Diana. ('Do you have relations with this woman?' asked one suspicious official, fortunately adding, as Mr. Alexander groped for the best answer, 'I mean, is she of your family?') They veered between rough hospitality in nomad tents and more urbane encounters with provincial governors, with moments of exaltation in lonely places, and a successful venture east of Herat, up the Hari Rud, to the ruined site of Firuzkoh, the twelfth-century capital of the Ghorid dynasty.

The three travellers in Russia proper already mentioned also have lively ways with anecdote and covered a remarkable amount of ground between them—Mr. Kalb and Mrs. Bigland each journeying in Central Asia as well as to the Caucasus, the Ukraine, Leningrad and other cities, while Mr. Salisbury passed through Siberia and enjoyed the distinction of spending some time in Mongolia. Mr. Kalb's year-long stay was in 1956-57, and his contacts with Soviet students—he was working on a thesis on Uvarov, one of Nicholas I's ministers—gave him some fascinating insight into Russian reactions to Khrushchev's debunking of Stalin and the Hungarian rising. Mr. Salisbury was making a return visit in 1959 after working in Russia as a newspaper correspondent between 1944 and 1954; Mrs. Bigland was returning in 1958 after a first visit in 1936; both found much new, much unchanged.

Mr. Salisbury evokes touchingly his sentimental pilgrimage to Saltikovka, the *dacha* (cottage) suburb outside Moscow where he had spent several summers—and where, in 1959, a neighbour who remembered him from five years earlier but had never ventured to approach him in those riskier days now made an appeal for contact with lost relatives in America. Mrs. Bigland spent one of the happiest days of her trip with the charming and dedicated welfare superintendent of a Kuibishev factory, watching her kindly handling of the painful family



Children beside the Kremlin walls

From 'To Moscow and Beyond'

problems which Soviet propaganda too often tries to sweep under the carpet; she enjoyed several days in Kiev, having escaped from her In-tourist guide, in the company of a sympathetic and highly intelligent local doctor ('In my opinion as a medical man Stalin was insane for several years before he died'), whose only *faux pas* was to invite to supper a Hungarian who proved to be in Russia much against his will and unable to forgive the Russians for 1956; she met an Uzbek housewife who owned an electric washing-machine for which her daughter had to carry water from a pump a mile and a half away. Mr. Kalb attended a fantastic meeting in the Lenin Library during which two hundred students shouted down the official who tried to sell them the Party line on Hungary and Poland; in Georgia he met students who would have none of the official criticism of Stalin; in Leningrad he was mobbed by Soviet bobbysoxers who took him for Yves Montand.

Russians as People (Phoenix House, 25s.), as its title indicates, is not a traveller's log but a study of the Russian character, old and new, upper and lower class, of manners and tastes and family relations. But the author, Wright Miller, who has stayed in Russia on five occasions over a period of twenty-five years, evokes landscapes (and townscapes) as well as anecdotes to illustrate his theme, and any intending traveller will find his book both helpful and entertaining. Like the three authors previously mentioned, Mr. Miller is a candid friend to the Russians. Essentially sympathetic, he yet refuses to pull punches, explaining but not excusing, rejecting whitewash in favour of a national portrait rich in individual colour. To read any one of these books is to be usefully warned of much that the visitor to Russia must contend with, while at the same time acquiring a warmer liking for 'Russians as people'. It is a pity that Soviet readers will not be able to share the experience.

ANDREW BOYD

Paris, France

PARIS ISN'T FRANCE: a half-truth now developed into an assumption that Paris is a city to shun. Paris for the week-end, perhaps, before the motor-coaches have begun to disgorge their freight; Paris, perhaps, for a stop on the way north when the holiday is over, for a theatre, two expensive dinners, an hour at the Deux Magots—this, we allow, is possible. But to stay in Paris for two weeks or three for no other reason than a liking to be there seems as outmoded as the legendary time when the American expatriates descended on Montparnasse and could be dislodged only by the Great Slump. Paris, we tell ourselves, is now a city like every other city: a monstrous garage from which we need to escape.

If we consult the recent travel books—even so



On the slopes of Montmartre

From 'Paris'

informative a one as Andrew Shirley's *South from Toulouse* (Chatto and Windus, 25s.)—we find that their common idiom identifies travel with an endurance-test between one garage and the next: '...slant in later from the Massif Central', Mr. Shirley exhorts us, 'turning west somewhere near Clermont Ferrand and hitting N20 at the festive little town of Brive...'. Perhaps Valéry Larbaud's *Allen* (1927), which describes a journey by car from Paris into the heart of the Bourbonnais, was the last time when such an expedition could be related to the civilized conversation that accompanied it.

But even Larbaud, modern travel's one classic apologist, came to the conclusion that exploration in breadth would have to be relinquished for discoveries in depth. Why leave Paris? He suggested that we should consider each *arrondissement* as an Independent State or a federation of *quartiers*, much in the same way as Chesterton once thought of Notting Hill. Such a traveller might confine himself for three weeks in, for example, the *Cinquième*. There, without crossing its frontiers, he could enjoy a *villégiature* with Buffon and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre in the Jardin des Plantes. He could walk, if he so pleased, to the baroque Val-de-Grâce or participate in the *vie populaire* of the Rue Mouffetard. If his explorations took him past the Sorbonne he would not be deflected by the lectures of

Professor Merleau Ponty but, with a finger in the relevant pages of the Marquis de Rochegude's *Promenades*, would continue his leisurely and observant way.

Paris has two literatures: the public and the private, the books which enumerate its treasures and the books which attempt to divulge its secret. Both are necessary and both must be discarded before initiation is vouchsafed. We need the Blue Guide (Benn, 21s.), but we must recognize the moment when it ceases to be of use. We need the books of the private explorers: Fargue's *Lé Piéton de Paris*, Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris* or Montherlant's *Le Fichier Parisien*, and we must forget them too because our discoveries must be our own. Indeed, Paris has a third literature which is the literature of France. Our initiation into the city's nature will have been more efficiently prepared if our hearing has been quickened to recognize certain ghostly footfalls: Diderot's nervous step in the arcades of the Palais Royal, Gérard de Nerval's shuffle along the Rue de la Vieille-Lanterne. Yet we must distrust our romanticism; the discovery of Paris is not a Literary Pilgrimage.

The importance of Mr. John Russell's *Paris* (Batsford, 21s.), is that he has achieved a very rare thing—a portrait of the city in which the public and the private have been brought together. 'The unity of Paris', he writes, 'is one of the great triumphs of the French intelligence', and his book is a lively and erudite history of this civic intelligence in action. His sharp perception of architecture is constantly at hand. Mr. Russell has written with a sense of urgency because he is aware, as everyone familiar with Paris must be, of the headlong momentum of contemporary transformation. Will Paris cease to be Paris? '*L'Europe est finie*', said Valéry, and if Europe is finished then the capital city of European civilization has had its day and Paris will be nothing but one more item in the *musée imaginaire*. Mr. Russell refuses to be dismayed. He knows that the future of the city does not lie with the Ministry of Culture but with the people—the Parisian as he is today: brisk, ironical, self-regarding, invalidish, fickle and dry'. These precise epithets demonstrate the authenticity of Mr. Russell's insight into the city's source of continuity and the perennial secret of its vitality. 'As the character of the Parisian has not altered for many generations so will the city survive in its inmost nature', he proclaims confidently. His book is a reassurance that Paris is still there for our discovery.

H. G. WHITEMAN

See also *Discovering the Camargue*, by Monica Krippner (Hutchinson, 25s.); the Michelin guide to the Pyrenees (Daily News Book Department, 12s. 6d.); *Your Guide to Corsica*, by Geoffrey Wagner (Alvin Redman, 18s.); *Corsica, Columbus's Isle*, by Joseph Chiari (Barrie and Rockliff, 25s.); *Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica*, by Eric and Barbara Whelpton (Hale, 21s.).

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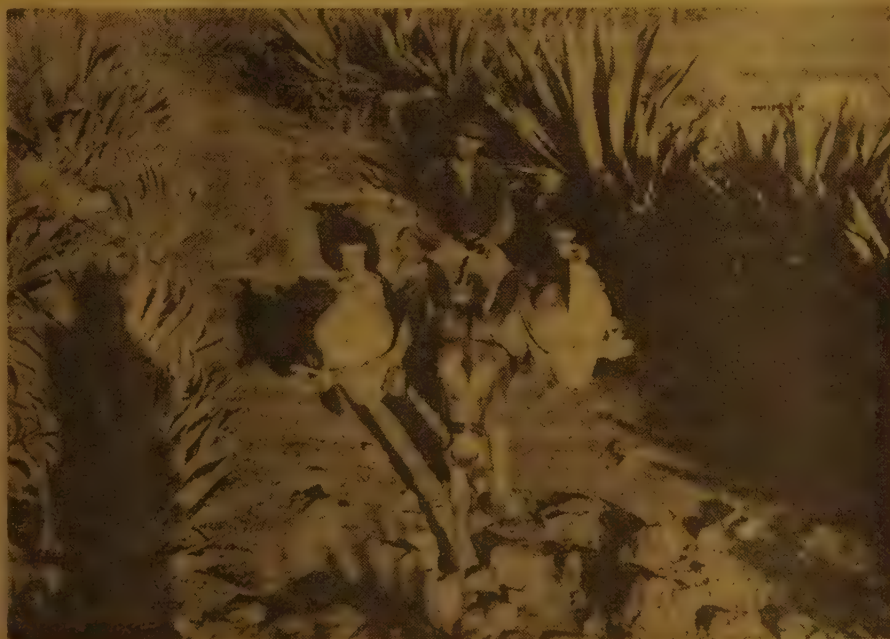
NONE OF THIS YEAR'S books is entirely satisfactory, except for Baedeker's *Auto Guide to Spain and Portugal* (Allen and Unwin, 32s.), which is more compact than ever, and accurate wherever I have been able to check it. Until the Blue Guide series bring out their long overdue *Southern Spain*, this book will be the serious traveller's best guide south of the Despeñaperros. North of that I still prefer to use the Blue Guide: it stretches the pocket more, but to some purpose.

What marvellous things guide-books are! Their chief virtue perhaps is that their authors are seldom tempted to generalize from insufficient knowledge. Would that that could be said of the writers of the rest of the books under review. But it cannot, they all generalize, deluding themselves that the Iberian Peninsula is an extraordinary place whose extraordinariness it is their business to isolate and sum up. This is a failure of perception for when one begins to know Spain and Portugal the quaint disappears; something much more vast, tragic and nearer takes its place; but what that something is is so inchoate, exigent and ordinary that no fly generalizations can begin to sum it up. And, alas, with J. B. Trend dead and Gerald Brenan busy becoming a major novelist we have no one writing in English at the moment who is capable of giving us more than a glimmering of what is, and has been, going on for the last twenty years under the apparently stable dictatorships of Franco and Salazar. There are only journalists, academics and amateurs who make up their own Spains and their own Portugals within the narrow limitations of their own knowledge.

This year it is four amateurs who divide themselves up, for some reason, into archies and mehitabels. The archies are questing, metaphysical; the mehitabels 'toujours gai'. Shirley Deane is very definitely a mehitabel and were charm, high spirits and a sympathetic nature adequate substitutes for organizing power and reflection she might by this time have written a good book about Spain, for she has a good eye and a gift for natural, unadjectival descriptive writing. What she has seen—and she has seen a lot—she lets readers of *The Road to Andorra* (John Murray, 18s.) see vividly, but distantly. The foreground is crowded, always, with herself, her bearded husband, her children, and her dog, gypsying it up in Ibiza, Andorra and points south. Which is all great fun and bohemian games—creditors, pig farming, a robbery, guzzlings,



Church of S. Esteban, Segovia: one of the many fine illustrations in *Romanesque Europe* (Batsford, £2 5s.), which has an introduction by R. H. C. Davis and notes on the pictures by Helmut Domke



A peasant in Algarve

contretemps with buses, trains, taxis and frontiers—but not to be taken too seriously lest one were forced to ask this butterfly why she didn't look under the leaves and discover Spain was not a bed of roses till a policeman waved a butterfly net at her personally.

No, this is unfair. Her previous book shows that she both knows and cares about Spain and Spaniards, but somehow not as she cares about Anglo-Saxons. This is, perhaps, what makes one oversharper with her, but she's nowhere near being a Leonard Wibberley. He's another beard and another mehitabel. He took a villa recently outside Estoril for a few months. Now he has written *No Garlic in the Soup* (Faber, 15s.) to tell us all about it. I suppose the result is mildly amusing and bohemian but, even if it is, it does not excuse Mr. Wibberley (who confesses that he never learnt the language, and that he never travels on third-class roads, even in the United States) for saying 'everyone [sic] in Portugal loves Salazar' or (page 177) 'you will travel far before you find a peasantry happier than the Portuguese country folk'.

Perhaps Mr. Huggett or Mr. Wright ought to take him by the scruff of the neck and show him. They have eyes and they have used them; it's just their generalizations that are so shockingly reactionary and condescending, men of the left though both of them are. They are both good writers, but they are not as superior to the Spaniards and the Portuguese as they think. Frank E. Huggett went to the Algarve, lived in it and in *South of Lisbon* (Gollancz, 21s.) describes it as it is, finitely beautiful, infinitely limited. He reminds me rather

of Matthew Arnold, making the same sort of strictures about nineteenth-century England, but whereas Arnold, a native, never doubted that the society he was writing about could be redeemed slowly and laboriously by education and concrete, practical reforms, Huggett, a foreigner, is pessimistic, fatalistic. He condemns the Portuguese forever to their present provincial, puritanical, impoverished, dreary, sun-redeemed existence. He doesn't know enough Portuguese radicals. They are not all as impractical as Galvao. To suggest that they are is as unreasonable as to suggest that, because Shelley and Ramsay MacDonald (say) were ineffectual, so is English socialism.

But this is a clever, honest, observant book and anyone who wants to know what

Portugal is actually like should read it, though he shouldn't believe Mr. Huggett's conclusions. The sun, and Batista, we used to be told, were enough to keep down Cuba. Richard Wright, too, is a great generalizer. With an understandable grudge, as an American Negro, against Europeans, he went to *Pagan Spain* (Bodley Head, 18s.) to take a look at a bunch of savages who were also Europeans and, of course, he found them.

If, instead of running his hands in gloves through the Iberian corn, he'd looked a little harder he might have stumbled on an ear or two of the truth which is that Spaniards, like Congolese, Portuguese, Americans, Englishmen and most other men, are struggling painfully, against more difficulties than most of us have, and against an antiquated regime that few of them love, to achieve a more just society.

MARTIN SHUTTLEWORTH

Charm of Austria

WHEN CHOOSING our holidays abroad we tend to decide by the place instead of by the people who are native to it, as if the scene itself were enough. But of course it is finally our response to the people that makes or mars the holiday mood. It is all very well to wander by ourselves all day in the mountains, gulping the high, heady air, chewing our way through a lump of *Jaegerwurst*, rhapsodizing over the alpine flora; but at day's end we must descend to the ordinary village again, among men and women engaged in the rough-and-tumble of daily life; and it is our contact with these that puts the mountain jaunt in perspective and brings us back to reality.

For myself, the preference is for Austria; and directly I cross over the border, north into Germany, west into Switzerland, though the scenery may be similar I lose at once the buoyancy I always enjoy among the Austrian people. Only this last year, finding myself by chance in the Engadine, where the landscape is every bit as beautiful as anything in neighbouring Tyrol, I had not been there many days when the sober and circumspect character of the place became insupportable and I knew I must escape. Accordingly, I clambered on to the crowded little autobus that bumps its way through the hills above the Inn valley and so came to Landeck. There I boarded the first available train, a *Bummelzug*, to Innsbruck. My carriage was full of country workers, talkative, frank, vastly unbuttoned in mood—one lusty matron soon had both arms tucked through those of her neighbours—and I felt at once a home-coming relief. D. H. Lawrence, in his *Twilight in Italy*, goes as usual to the heart of the matter when he tells how, in Switzerland, he only waited for one thing, the opportunity to get away. 'The horrible, average ordinariness of it all, something utterly without flower or soul or transcendence, the horrible vigorous ordinariness, is too much'.

Ordinariness, yes; and, just as horrible, the sheer habit of efficiency, the brazen will to



Spring Festival in the Tyrol

From 'Austria'

exploit every possibility. Nothing must be left to chance—or God. The Swiss, one feels, have it all weighed up to the last gramme. It is the same with the Germans. And if this sort of thing irks you, no amount of grandiose scenery will restore you to a good mood. A blight has settled on the spirit. But nobody, happily, could call the Austrians efficient: they seem to have no will for it even when they try. What comes first with them, all the time, is the act of living, the joy and diversity of it, the peril even. No wonder Austria is dubbed the birthplace of baroque, that art of the abundance and theatricality of life. It may have originated at the court, but it rapidly filtered through to the people, spilling over into their everyday life: cribs and cradles, sleighs and roundabouts, dinner plates, the simplest household articles, songs, words, figures of speech, all took on the colour and form of baroque.

Incidentally, may it not be this baroque foundation of the Austrian character that has so endeared the country to Englishmen? The lack of this dancing note, this gay superfluity, in our own staid and puritanical way of life could be a reason why we respond so readily to a people for whom it is the norm. The release we experience is almost therapeutic.

Even Austria, however, shows uncomfortable signs of becoming just a little more efficient. And, ironically enough, the tourist trade (Austria's chief export) is in the main responsible for this. Gigantic pylons now straddle the lovely

Fernpass. The indomitable Sonnenspitz, where recently the village priest from Ehrwald climbed to consecrate a new cross, is (I understand) threatened with a modern hotel on top, financed by Germany, whose efficiency nothing daunts. And even the peasants, in all but the remotest parts, are slowly learning that it pays to pander to the tourists' unaccountable demand for the latest mod. cons.

But there are still great tracts of Austria, especially in the mountains, where the authentic character remains virtually unspoiled. Practically the whole of Burgenland is strangely neglected, whilst even in the Tyrol there are towns, like Schwaz and Rattenberg, and innumerable villages, where the tourist rarely ventures. Out of season, of course, everywhere it is better: even the weather is better. Then Innsbruck, where it sometimes seems as if all the world of tourism had got stuck in the Maria-Theresien-Strasse, becomes itself again, one of the most delightful cities in middle Europe. In October and May, when the swarming summer and skiing seasons are over, the shopkeepers sit back and count their gains, pondering new and gaudier lures for the next lot of tourists, and in the countryside the peasants relax into their unhurried ways again, enlivening the hour with tales of the strange foreigners who ruffled their peace for a while.

As for guide-books, the *Globetrotter Guide to Austria* (Galley Press, 12s. 6d.) is useful, especially for the motorist, and contains some thirty detailed 'Touring Areas' besides much other information. Typically, it comes originally from Switzerland. The Vista Books *Austria*, by Claude Vausson (6s., from France this time), is not so much a straight guide as a summarized account of the historical, artistic, and political background of the country. It has neither map nor index.

C. HENRY WARREN

A review of Greek travel books, by Patrick Leigh Fermor, has been unavoidably held over.

The Journal of Christopher Columbus (Anthony Blond and the Orion Press, £2. 5s.), is a revised and annotated edition *de luxe*, by L. A. Vigneras, based on Cecil Jane's translation, and with a cartographical appendix by R. A. Skelton. There are ninety illustrations, ten of them in colour.

* * *

The Roman Drawings of the XVII and XVIII Centuries, edited by Sir Anthony Blunt, and Mr. Hereward Lester Cooke of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, is the latest volume to be published by the Phaidon Press of the catalogue of drawings in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. The work contains sixty-six plates and 120 illustrations to the text; the price is £3 10s.

* * *

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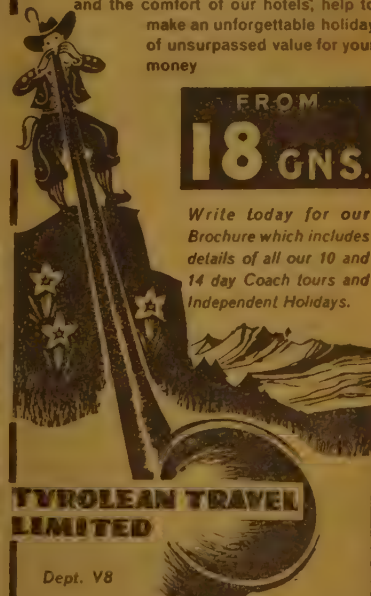
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CRITIC ON THE HEARTH

Weekly comments on B.B.C. programmes by independent contributors

Television Broadcasting

DOCUMENTARY

Material from U.S.A.

MR. DAVID SUSSKIND is one of American television's bright boys. He first became known to many viewers here for his recorded interview with Mr. Khrushchev, which the B.B.C. showed on October 10. Interviewed himself, during a visit to this country, by Kenneth Allsop ('Tonight', January 2), Mr. Susskind told us that he does not think very highly of much of American television, and that he feels it is a pity that we import as many American programmes as we do. Most of them, he claimed, are negative, sitting-on-the-fence affairs, because the programme sponsors try to please all 180,000,000 Americans all the time. Good television is bound to be provocative and to antagonize as many viewers as it pleases. (B.B.C. please note.)

If much of American television is sop for the masses, an occasional programme makes an impact unequalled by anything the B.B.C. has achieved in documentary programmes during my years of viewing. Mr. Susskind's Khrushchev interview was one, the nine-year-old 'Victory at Sea', now being

shown by the B.B.C. for a second time, was another; and 'The U-2 Affair' (January 2) was a third.

This last was an extremely cleverly scripted and produced telefilm (made by N.B.C. News), having a tension (though we all knew the outcome) that lasted throughout its fifty minutes. Yet the amount of strictly relevant material available was small—shots of another U-2 aircraft on

'Victory at Sea', need not in itself be taken as an indication of a lack of good documentary material (there is other evidence to support that supposition). According to Ludovic Kennedy in *Radio Times*, one New York station has been screening the twenty-six instalments almost continuously during the past nine years. By that standard another showing here seven years after the first is not excessive, especially as television is now in about four times as many homes as in 1953.

Ludovic Kennedy is introducing each weekly part. He set the scene for the first of them (January 4) shortly and clearly. I was glad that he did not make too much of the notorious one-sidedness of the treatment, which belittles the British contribution to the winning of the Battle of the Atlantic. If the Americans like to believe that their navy won that battle, too, as Errol Flynn won the Burma campaign, let them, I say. What matters is that, finally, the battle was won.

What a welcome addition to the ranks of those who tell travellers' tales is Miss Mai Zetterling. Her first documentary, about the encroachment of 'civilization' into Lapland, was transmitted on Christmas Eve; her second, 'Lords of Little Egypt', about the 5,000 or so gypsies who gather every year on the Camargue, on January 3. Each provided a colourful, if superficial, account of the lives of two very different sorts of people during an annual festival.

The pictures were often beautiful and the commentary, by Miss Zetterling's husband, David Hughes, was intermittent and to the point, and not a continual chatter for the sake of avoiding a silence (why do so many producers fear silence?). Juanita, from London, with the dark eyes and black tresses of a gypsy but a most ungypsyish voice, was not as communicative as we could have wished about the com-



From 'The U-2 Affair'. Mr. Khrushchev showing photographs of the captured pilot's equipment to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow



From 'Lords of Little Egypt': above, Juanita, the English gypsy who attended the annual festival at Les Saintes-Maries in the Camargue; below, head of the statue carried in procession



the ground and in flight, of the luxury caravan at the Turkish air-base in which Powers and his wife lived, the pictures released by the Russians of the aircraft wreckage and of Powers's escape equipment. To it were added interviews with the aeroplane's designer, with several of the leading Washington newspaper correspondents who covered the story from the capital, with Mr. James Hagerty, the President's press secretary, and government officials and senators.

It was most skilfully done. The handling of the incident by the President, the Pentagon, and other government departments was criticized openly and implicitly. The trial was mentioned only in passing, and I felt that that was a weakness, because it made it seem that the Americans begrudged the Russians the credit they had earned by their conduct of it. Yet the credit due to the Americans for allowing the film to be made is enormous. In how many other countries, in either camp, could it have been made?

A second showing on the B.B.C. of the well-known N.B.C. epic,



A catamaran, subject of the programme on January 6

pulsion she felt to attend the annual fair. It seems that even Miss Zetterling, with her winning smile, had succeeded little better than others in really getting to know these reserved folk.

It was quite a shock to see the well-groomed David Lutyens in a turtle-neck sweater in a boat-builder's yard ('Catamarans', January 6). The merits of these unusual craft deserve publicity and they were given it. No manufacturer, pouring out good money into other channels, can ever have had such a boost for his products as the Prout brothers and Mr. Henderson got for nothing.

PETER POUND

DRAMA

'The Train Set'

IN THE FEVER of the present-day search for kitchen-sink drama the quality of the find sometimes becomes obscured in the delight at the finding. So, at least, I feel was the case with *The Train Set* by Mr. David Turner on January 5. Not, let me hasten to add, that it was negligible or without a gritty merit of its own.

On the other hand, its position was never overtly stated. We never knew whether we were being presented with a drama of a particular instance, holding out its interest for us in the reactions of the characters to their circumstances, or whether the inhabitants of this world were intended as representatives of their class and place in society. As it was the play switched back and forth between these extremes so that the family of the Midland worker, who desired to give his boy the train set he himself had desired as a child, seemed to exist for us on a time machine plane, partly in the dark satanic 'thirties when three pounds was a worker's ransom and partly today when the telly burns in every front parlour.

I have dwelt on this apparent ambivalence of direction because today, being more fully acquainted with the type of society depicted here, we are less likely to accept the validity of an argument when the facts appear to clash with our own knowledge.

This is not to suggest that people like this do not exist; simply that to make their problems credible a tighter grip must be maintained on the bones of their existence. Otherwise their arbitrariness will appear as invalid as a rigged election.

If the play was ultimately unsatisfying, and parts were good indeed, the acting was the reverse. Mr. Robert Shaw beautifully conveyed the Midlander, even if the accent, though no doubt authentic, came as strangely on the ears as an utterly alien tongue. Miss Mary Chester as the wife gave a hauntingly terrifying performance of a neurotic on the verge of lunacy. Yet most brilliant, because unexpected, was the acting of Master Roy Holder as the child. With the soft appealing eyes of a puppy hoping not to be misunderstood and a smile that crept on and off his face like a shy visitor, uncertain of his welcome, peering through the door, this young actor was as subtle in the manner in which moods were reflected on his face as a professional of years of experience. He did not simply present a highly intelligent reading of the part; he got under the skin of the character that it was almost impossible not to believe that the actor and the character were one and the same being.

No one could possibly claim this for the



Roy Holder (left) as Jimmy and Robert Shaw as Henry in *The Train Set*

eponymous heroine—so for want of a better word I name her—of *Venus Brown* by Mr. Rex Tucker (January 8). Nor could one possibly deny the opportunism of the theme. Here was an interesting if partial study of that fashionable feminine ailment—nymphomania—to be placed alongside *Lolita* and *Butterfield 8* on the shelf reserved for 'Ladies Only'.

The author overcame his main obstacle which was to create a woman who was prepared to love on sight any man (preferably good-looking and more than sound in wind and limb) but who would not be mistaken for simply another good-time girl. Having established the girl, taken god-like from the Cretan sea by the soldier in 1941 and worshipped ever since (though either television time is again up the creek or Venus preserved her first bloom of youth quite remarkably) Mr. Tucker is by no means so successful in motivating her pursuit of the opposite sex.

Reasonable though so unrelenting a fixation might be in straightforward sexual terms, and fascinating though it would prove to be, clearly this kind of explanation is impossible on television.



'The Tab Hunter Show': Mary Murphy as Susan and Tab Hunter as Paul Morgan in *Bachelor of Large*

Presenting the case for affection, comradeship, and human love being of greater worth than honour, reverence, and deification, the author states rather than persuades us of the truth of his doctrine that love suitably placed can cure an excessive desire for it. The paradox was fetching, but I remained unconvinced to the end.

The dramatist was his own producer and made a very fair job of it. His attention to detail in the garage and his use of harsh metallic sound to provoke discomfort and tension in the viewer was well judged. Sound performances came from Mr. Bernard Lee as the cuckolded husband, and Miss Lisa Gastoni as the goddess. Mr. John Turner was a tough lover and Mr. Nyall Florenz was impetuously passionate as the teen-age French boy.

A new light comedy series from America, *The Tab Hunter Show* (Thursdays), which has not pleased

some of my colleagues at least pleased me. I found it a change from the brash loud-mouthed comedy shows that we seem to import from the U.S.A. with happy abandon and then proceed to copy. Admittedly slick and plagued by a canned audience which becomes farcical when the comedy develops as often as not on the wide open and deserted spaces of Malibu Beach, it was, all the same, gently amusing and inventive in its story of the good-looking perpetual bachelor. Mr. Tab Hunter, while no Oscar-winning performer, has a lithe charm and an easy manner in making his points that was pleasing to watch; the script was bright and the photography impeccable.

ANTHONY COOKMAN, JNR.

Sound Broadcasting

DRAMA

Between and Bejabs

The Go-Between, by L. P. Hartley, first appeared as a novel in 1953 and would find a place in any sensible critic's list of the dozen best English novels of the last ten years. Dealing with an adult's reconstruction of his emotions and misunderstandings as a child who became involved in the loves and miseries of three adults, it was sensitive and delicate but also hard and clear. Its freedom from slop was then quite astonishing, and I cannot recall another novelist since that date who has ventured into the treacherous no-man's-land between the worlds of children and the rest of us without being pompous or silly-clever.

I haven't re-read the novel yet, but Archie Campbell's adaptation and production of it (Home, January 2) impressed me as having the same rare tact, sharp intelligence, and quiet charitableness as the original. It was the sort of job which should shame to silence the mugs who prattle about radio being a dying medium. The narrator (Denys Blakelock) is a man of sixty who finds a diary which he kept in 1900 when he was thirteen and is carried back into the growing pains which helped to make him the tolerant but cautious and slightly prissy old gent he now is. The flashbacks from forgetful adult, to diary, to life as a child, can rarely have been so practical and purposeful or managed so well.

The storyteller as a boy (Anthony Reese) sounded remarkably like a boy. He was good when entering curses against bullies in magic blood in his diary, and plausibly vain, honest, and embarrassed when they came off. His dis-

comfort about clothes, manners, sports, and general sophistication on a visit to the home of a much richer schoolfellow was beautifully done. In the traps of snobbery the boy suffered and dodged and occasionally innocently scored. But his main troubles came from a crush on his friend's sister (Rachel Gurney), who was in love with a rough farmer (Ralph Hallett) while preparing to marry an amiable but ugly Lord (Ian Lubbock). The language of this mortal affair, junior and senior, common and lordly, was right for period, slanginess and euphemism. The boy thought his heroine 'spifficating', was sure that she would never fall so low as to 'spoon', and, when she plainly did, thought it 'an awful sell'. Matters of love and sex were treated with as much tenderness and realism as have been belatedly recognized by a jury in another work which also dealt with desire, class, and country life. Apart from a touch of melodrama in the music attending the boy's significant discovery of a plant of deadly nightshade, there was no over-pointing or excess explanation in the production of a story whose power is in its reticence. The cast was admirable and made a cricket match and its subsequent supper as entertaining as illicit love.

I wish that Seán O'Casey and Synge had not been mentioned in connexion with *The Weaver's Grave* by Seumas O'Kelly, which was adapted for radio by Micheál O hAodha and produced by John Gibson (Third, January 4). It sounded very authentic to me, though I sighed with sympathy at one point when the storyteller (Frank O'Dwyer) said of a garrulous quarrel that it had 'an intimate obscurity that no outsider can hope to follow'. But Irishness is not enough. This charnel-house farce had some of the laboured long-windedness present in the weaker O'Casey. Nationalism apart, Shakespeare himself overdid grave-diggers and the joke about the Widow of Ephesus has never been all that funny. However, I liked mostly the tedious brief arguments between 'a grand old stone-breaking gentleman' (Thomas Studley) and a persistent nailer (Harry Brogan). And Malachi Roohan (Arthur O'Sullivan) paid out a long line of rhetoric about life, death, weaving and graveyards all being a dream, with much enthusiasm and conviction. His patient daughter (Maire O'Sullivan) was first-rate, and the play had patches of true comedy and likely enough old chat.

The Judge's Story by Charles Morgan (Home, January 7) turned out to be a better morality play than might have been expected in its adaptation by John Richmond. The pursuit of the Judge (Donald Wolfitt), a symbol of integrity, by a tempting and nosey Beelzebub of a businessman (Anthony Jacobs) was nicely puzzling and lifelike to begin with; and so was the anxiety and resistant virtue of the daughter of the Judge's platonic love (June Tobin). There was, in fact, genuine drama and keen clear dialogue for about three-quarters of the run of the play. But then, as wickedness became a matter of principle and was unmasked, and Stoic virtue prepared to be triumphant there were a dreadful lot of speeches intended to be profound or subtle which the best actor in the world could not make into anything but high-class flam. It is one of the literary problems of our period that the French, who are masters at psychological chess in the novel, have a lasting respect for Charles Morgan, who played the same game but patently cheated by going up in an idealistic balloon at critical moments. And yet he was a very respectable dramatic critic and in his fiction could tackle moral questions like those of this story with the economy natural to the theatre, fair directness, and something near success. The production, by Hugh Stewart, did Morgan proud.

FREDERICK LAWS

THE SPOKEN WORD



I Remember, I Remember . . .

I SHOULD LIKE to start the new year in a Dodo frame of mind: 'Everybody has won, and all must have prizes'. But only the first of the programmes this week was a prizewinning entry and deserved a comfit from Alice's box.

I must confess that before I switched on (Home Service, December 30), I had had misgivings about 'Tolstoy through the eyes of a child'. Had this talk escaped the vigilance of the B.B.C. who gave us a feature on Tolstoy the previous month? Was it an overlooked coincidence, or a left-over from Mr. Sykes's programme? Frankly, I don't care now if it was. Count Alexis Bobrinskoy's child's-eye view of Tolstoy was among the best half-dozen talks I have heard in a year of listening. It set the Russian scene, and it gave us Tolstoy precisely as an observant child would have seen him: an iconoclast, very much larger than life, bathed in the aura of legend, and wearing one of his white socks inside-out. Yes, there was a lot to tell Nanny afterwards; and perhaps there is still enough for another talk from Count Bobrinskoy. Anyhow, I am delighted that one small child was seen and also heard.

I was all the more conscious of the quality of this talk when I had heard 'Gordon Craig Remembers' (Third Programme, December 31). The thought of Mr. Craig recalling Max Beer-bohm, la Duse, and Sarah was a glittering invitation; but what did we really learn, except that Sarah would keep her visitors waiting for one and a quarter hours (and that we might have guessed in any case)? No, it was all too like that famous recollection: 'Sat between Disraeli and Gladstone. Had fish'. This talk was a might-have-been, and I need not have delayed my New Year revelry by twenty minutes.

Another disappointing programme was the underwater edition of 'The Archaeologist' (Network Three, January 3). 'Harvest from the Sea' could have been a fascinating account of something rich and strange. As it was, the speakers threw away a gift of a subject, the facts were presented without an iota of enthusiasm, and Miss Kenyon, who controlled the discussion, had the most deplorable microphone manner I have heard for months. Perhaps we should have had a straight talk or a documentary, perhaps the producer was entirely to blame. But here, in any case, was another programme to prove how inept the experts can be on the air.

There was more remembrance of things past in 'European Enquiry' (Home Service, January 3). The tape-recorder had been taken round secondary schools in half-a-dozen countries, and highly inflammable questions had been asked. Which nineteenth-century statesman do you most admire? Who was to blame for the two world wars this century? The answers showed an unexpected and refreshing diversity, but diversity was the downfall of the programme; and the broadcast, with all its split-second comments, was a marvel of over-ingenuous editing. I could constantly hear the scissors snipping away at the tapes.

The celestial cocktail party, the fictional face to face, is a heaven-sent form for the writers of feature programmes. It is infinitely elastic, it allows chronological licence, it gives dramatic shape and intensity to almost any discussion, and, deftly handled, it can give the dullerest topic an interest. But so far the form has usually been applied to history; and Mr. Rayner Heppenstall's originality is to apply it firmly to the present. 'The Generations' is a trio of imaginary conversations on changing beliefs and attitudes in our time, and it is set in a London club where four disputants, representing four generations,

discuss the principal aspects of modern life. The treatment is intended (somewhat rashly, one feels) to be 'casual, intimate and light'. The first conversation (Third Programme, January 5) was most disappointing. It was much too concentrated and self-conscious to be casual; and no amount of 'let me get you another', or 'a nice cold lager for me', or referring to Mr. Spender as Stephen, enabled me to suspend my disbelief. I found the conversation too consistently intellectual to be intimate; and not for a moment did I find it light. Perhaps Mr. Heppenstall had had his doubts about it, and had done some drastic last-minute editing, for the programme was some seventeen minutes short. In any case, it left me wondering why he hadn't just asked three friends in for a chat.

JOANNA RICHARDSON

MUSIC



Small Mercies

IN A NOT particularly rewarding week, but rather one in which the listener to music had to be grateful for small mercies (with the exception of the repeat broadcast of *Billy Budd*, to which I shall refer later), I nevertheless picked out several programmes which, for different reasons, seemed to merit attention. One of these was a piano recital ('live', for a change) by John Ogdon in 'Music at Night' (Home Service, January 2). These late-night broadcasts are often worth listening to, although as they always start after 11 p.m. I do not imagine they reach a very wide audience. Nor is it likely that those who do listen at that hour are in a particularly receptive, still less critical, frame of mind. On this occasion John Ogdon was playing Liszt and Beethoven, and I for one found much to enjoy in his playing of Liszt's *Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este* and the *Valse oubliée* which he followed by a very sensitive performance of Beethoven's E major Sonata, Op. 109. I listened with interest, too, to the broadcast from Glasgow in 'Music to Remember' (Home, January 3) of an excellent performance by the American violinist, Fredell Lack, of Sir William Walton's Violin Concerto, which he played with the B.B.C. Scottish Orchestra, conducted by Norman Del Mar. There is fine music in this Concerto, especially the first movement, and it was pleasant to hear it again, as it is not a work which is very frequently performed. For listeners unfamiliar with the work Antony Hopkins, in 'Talking about Music' (Network Three, January 1), had provided an excellent analysis with plenty of well-chosen musical illustrations.

I often wonder why it is that, in the virtuoso category, this country seems to produce so many more fine pianists than string players. The number of British-born violinists or 'cellists with an international reputation must be very small, and this somewhat depressing reflection should make us all the more appreciative of an artist as talented and gifted as Christopher Bunting who has few rivals among British 'cellists. Hearing him play the Dvořák Concerto with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, under Rudolf Schwarz (Home, January 4), only confirmed me in this view; his performance could hardly have been bettered.

Continuing my browsing, I listened to the Aeolian String Quartet (leader, Sydney Humphreys) playing Beethoven (first Rasumovsky) and Shostakovich No. 1 (Third Programme, January 5) and thought their ensemble good, even if their tone at times was a trifle rough. They gave what was perhaps a rather light-weight performance of the Beethoven, and seemed really more at home in the Shostakovich, which is pleasant enough to listen to, though not great music. This was the first of three pro-

grammes in each of which the Quartet will play one of the three Rasumovsky quartets. Tuning in to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (Home, January 6) I heard Denis Matthews playing Mozart's C major Concerto with Hugo Rignold conducting, and was able to admire once again his artistry and intelligent and sensitive approach to the great classics.

Another excellent British pianist is Colin Horsley, who was the soloist in the 'Saturday Concert' (Third, January 7) in Lennox Berkeley's Concerto for Piano and double string orchestra. He was playing with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, under Rudolf Schwarz. The slow movement of this Concerto is particularly fine, and the writing for both piano and strings is always distinguished. Colin Horsley played the solo part with fluency and understanding.

This time I was more successful with the repeat broadcast of *Billy Budd* (Third, January 8) which radio interference (it turned out to be due to sun-spots) had prevented me from hearing properly last November. On the whole, the broadcast confirmed my first impressions on seeing a stage performance of the opera some years ago. It seemed to me then, as it does now, that by far the best things in the score are the sailors' choruses and shanties and, from beginning to end, the extraordinarily evocative and imaginative orchestral writing, full of colour and invention. On the other hand, the ear soon tires of the somewhat monotonous declamatory and 'naturalistic' writing for the voices, and the almost complete absence of any melody even when, as in Billy's final monologue, one feels that a touch of lyrical expansiveness would not

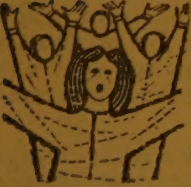
be out of place. To find the right formula for a modern opera is not easy, but the solution adopted by Stravinsky in *The Rake's Progress*, for example—i.e., the acceptance, since opera is in any case an artificial form, of all the old operatic formal conventions—is probably more satisfactory in the long run. Peter Pears, as Captain 'Starry' Vere, repeated his old success, while Joseph Ward, Michael Langdon, Alexander Young and Trevor Anthony as Budd, Claggart, the Novice, and Dansker were all excellent.

The B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra and Men's Chorus and the Choir of Watford Boys' Grammar School, conducted by the composer, contributed substantially to the success of Mr. Basil Coleman's production.

ROLLO H. MYERS

Gluck and the Reform of Opera

By WINTON DEAN



'Orpheus and Eurydice' will be broadcast in the Third Programme at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, January 16

GLUCK'S STATUS in operatic history has often been compared with that of Wagner; and indeed there are obvious parallels. Both reacted against the Italian policy of giving pre-eminence to the solo voice as a virtuoso instrument, and against the closed forms that established themselves as a result. Both worked for greater continuity of design, a less abrupt divorce of the action of an opera from its emotional expression. Gluck in his maturity expanded the recitative in the direction of the aria, dropping the *secco* form altogether; Wagner assimilated both types of vocal utterance into a continuous arioso, with the main musical thought concentrated in the orchestra. Both chose mythological subjects as vehicles for general truths. Moreover each drew much of his inspiration from France. Gluck's blend of Italian training with the declamatory vocal style, prominent chorus and still more prominent ballet of the French theatre has always been recognized. A smoke-screen of his own words and the selectiveness of historical memory have concealed the fact that Wagner found the whole conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (and a good deal else, including the leit-motive) in the opera of the French Revolution and Empire, which itself owed much to Gluck and the theorists of his time.

Nevertheless Gluck had neither the temperament nor the technical equipment of a Wagner. We are apt to think of artistic reformers as men with a mission, fighting their way through obstacles against the pressure of public opinion and finally attaining a goal they have pursued, in a more or less straight line, since some youthful revelation. This is a comparatively modern view; it applies to Wagner, whose precept and example have helped to nourish it, and to Schönberg; it will not do for Monteverdi, and still less for Gluck. There never was a 'reformer' so little in advance of his age and so perfectly adapted to swimming with the current rather than against it. But if Gluck, seen in the context of history, seems to exemplify the virtues of the Duke of Plaza Toro in leading his regiment from behind, that does not diminish his achievement or his stature as an artist. Nor is he an exceptional case. As a rule the reformer who marches in front either lacks the genius to bring his ideas to full flower, in which case someone else gets the credit for them (the boldest innovators among the early romantics were not Weber, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, or even Berlioz, but the half-forgotten composers of the previous generation, Cherubini, Méhul,

Lesueur, and Spontini); or he leads his followers into a ditch, as Wagner led his operatic successors, because they cannot see where he is going and fall into the traps he instinctively avoids.

The ideas expressed in Gluck's famous preface to *Alceste* were not new. If they had been, it is most unlikely that his reform operas would have been staged at all, much less applauded. By 1762, the year of the first production of *Orfeo* in Vienna, there was already a strong party hostile to the court poet Metastasio and the older type of *opera seria* of which he was the embodiment. The movement was largely literary in origin, deriving its ideas from Rousseau, Winckelmann, and other writers, who urged the pursuit of natural expression and antique grandeur in all the arts as opposed to the ornamental exuberance of the baroque. Algarotti's book on opera, published in 1755, anticipated the ideas not only of Gluck but of Wagner. The leaders in Vienna were Count Durazzo, the Court Chamberlain, and the poet Calzabigi. All they needed was a composer.

Gluck was then nearly fifty. For twenty years he had been purveying old-style *opera seria* in half a dozen countries, and had shown a special liking for the librettos of Metastasio himself, setting ten of them in succession between 1748 and 1756. But for Calzabigi, his collaborator in *Orfeo*, *Alceste* and *Paride ed Elena*, he might have followed the same course to the end of his days. He himself admitted his debt to Calzabigi, adding: 'How much soever of talent a composer may have, he will never produce any but mediocre music, if the poet does not awaken in him that enthusiasm without which the productions of all the arts are but feeble and drooping'. This is scarcely revolutionary language, and we cannot imagine it on the lips of Wagner. Gluck needed a push to fire his enthusiasm. Even then it did not burn with a consistent flame. He was no implacable enemy of Italian vocalism; he wrote the part of Orfeo for a castrato, the same Guadagni who had been trained by Handel in London. Nor did Gluck abandon *opera seria*; he set three more of Metastasio's librettos in 1763-65.

Yet *Orfeo* is a genuine landmark. Calzabigi's choice of the Orpheus legend, a fertile symbol of the artist's predicament, was a deliberate return to the starting point of the early Florentines. Gone are the subplots, the amorous convolutions and the dynastic rivalries of *opera seria*; everything is subordinated to the central theme in its naked simplicity. The 1762 version already shows considerable French influence, in

the suppression of *secco* recitative and the organic use of choral and dance movements. Gluck, besides visiting Paris on his way to London, had composed or arranged ten French *opéras-comiques* for the Viennese court; Calzabigi had spent some ten years in the French capital, which as so often was the principal source of the new aesthetic ideals. His natural, unadorned treatment of the story brought out Gluck's full potential, and enabled him to express those ideals in their most perfect operatic form.

The remarkable thing about Gluck's operas is not so much their place in history as the fact that they have held the stage ever since and can still offer a profoundly moving experience. No mere opportunist could have achieved this, as we can see from the fate of Meyerbeer. Nor is it the product of outstanding skill: no artist ever wrought so enduringly on such a slight basis of technique. Gluck had a strong sense of the practical, both in what would come off in the theatre and—perhaps rarer and equally valuable—in what his own limitations would permit. Any challenge likely to expose them he took care to evade. We do not need to bring in Handel's cook to notice his weakness in counterpoint; but it scarcely matters, since the context seldom if ever makes demands in this direction. He stretched his gifts to the utmost, and he wasted nothing; many famous pieces, such as Orfeo's 'Che puro ciel', were salvaged from discarded early works.

This after all is a negative virtue. Gluck tells us in the preface to *Alceste* that he aimed at 'a beautiful simplicity'. Many others have done the same, and succeeded only in being flat and tedious. Gluck carried it off triumphantly, thanks to an exquisite feeling for melody and a sense of balance, both in form and texture, that enabled him to fuse drama with music and evoke a sublime vision of the world of Greek mythology. The true classical spirit may sometimes be remote, but it is never cold; the Elysian Fields are as vividly re-created as the streets of Wagner's Nuremberg. Gluck can wring our hearts by setting Orfeo's lament for the lost Eurydice as a formal aria in C major with the simplest harmonic basis. We find something of the same timeless beauty in *The Trojans* of Berlioz, the greatest work that derives from Gluck's heritage. It is the genius, not the reformer or the technical innovator, to whom posterity listens; the two are found in one body far less frequently than it is now fashionable to suppose.

Bridge Forum



Answers to Listeners' Questions—XII

By HAROLD FRANKLIN and TERENCE REESE

Question 1 (from S. Haggas, Bradford): The following hand occurred in a match between Bradford and Leeds. It caused a big swing and a great deal of discussion:

WEST	EAST
♠ A K Q J 10 4	♠ 8 3
♥ —	♥ A Q J 3
♦ Q J 10	♦ 8 7 6 3
♣ A Q 4 2	♣ K 7 5

The Bradford pair bid as follows:

WEST	EAST
2S	3H
4C	4NT (Blackwood)
5H	6C
No	

This was two down, for the defenders made two diamonds and a diamond ruff. The Leeds pair did better:

WEST	EAST
2S	3H
3NT	No

Eleven tricks were made in this contract.

Four of the players said that West's Four Clubs in the first sequence was a bad bid, four said it was the right bid. What do you think?

Answer: Frankly, we think it remarkable that there were four supporters for Four Clubs. West's hand is not improved by the heart response and any progress towards a slam must come from his partner.

The bid of 3 N.T. at the other table was not too obvious, but we think it was well judged. The alternatives are Three Spades or Four Spades. This last call would indicate a self-supporting suit but not an overwhelming hand, so East could pass.

East's 4 N.T. in the first sequence was doubtful: Five Clubs would have been better, though the pair would already have been too high.

Question 2 (from Mrs. G. Griffiths, Congresbury): With neither side vulnerable, my side 60 below, I held the following as East:

♠ 10 8 4 3	♥ 6 3 2	♦ A K J 6 2	♣ 10
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The bidding went:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1H	3C	3H	?

Actually I passed and opponents were one down in Three Hearts. However, my partner held:

♠ A K 5	♥ J	♦ 7 3	♣ K Q J 8 7 4 2
---------	-----	-------	-----------------

So we could have made Four Clubs, and if they had gone to Four Hearts I would have doubled. Why I ask about the hand is that my partner, who has the reputation of being the best player at the club where I play, said that I should have bid Four Clubs over Three Hearts. Was that just 'being right after the event', or do you agree?

Answer: Four Clubs would indeed have been a good 'expert' bid. You were right not to

introduce your diamonds at the Four level, and it was too close to double Three Hearts. Four Clubs might be one down, but your singleton 10 was not a negligible card, you had two top winners, and the fact that you had three hearts made it likely that your partner would be short.

Question 3 (from J. Boeck-Nielsen, Copenhagen): Often there is argument and bad feeling because a declarer has hesitated for a while before making a play, when in fact he had nothing to consider on that trick and was perhaps planning ahead. It has been suggested in our country that declarer should *always* be allowed to take his time—for example, in the sort of situation when he has K J x in dummy and Q 10 x in hand. Do you think that that would save many arguments?

Answer: It would introduce a rather undesirable element of 'acting', would it not? Suppose declarer had x x x on table, Q x in hand: is it suggested that he should puff and blow before 'finessing' the Queen? Somehow we don't think it would work.

The only satisfactory solution is this: at the first trick declarer should always be allowed to take his time. Thereafter he should attempt to cultivate a steady rhythm of play, neither fast nor slow.

The result of the Christmas bridge competition will be published next week.

LESSON 4

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London Guide

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Have You Tried . . .

HAVE YOU TRIED to keep the yolk of an egg after you have used the white? Put it into a cup and cover it with cold water to protect it from the dust, and keep it in a cool place. When you want to use the yolk, pour off the water.

Have you tried to boil large old potatoes this way? Cook them in boiling salted water until the outsides are soft, then add 1 pint of cold water. The cold water will send the heat to the centres and enable the potatoes to finish cooking right through without breaking up.

Have you tried to prevent your batch of scones from being undercooked on top and black underneath? The baking tray is probably too large for the oven and does not allow a circulation of air. The heat hits the tray and is reflected downwards, overcooking the bottom of the scones.

ANNE WILD

—'Shopping List' (Home Service)

A Special Baked Custard

This recipe for Baked Custard is, in the words of the listener who sent it in, 'fit for a king'.

Make an ordinary baked custard, but a rich one, using an extra egg but only 1 oz. of sugar. Leave it over-night to get quite cold; next day, just before you serve it, sprinkle the top thickly with granulated sugar—about 2 oz.—and heat it quickly under a hot grill. (Make sure the dish can stand a high heat.) This caramellizes the sugar. It can be topped with chopped walnuts and cream, but even without it is fit to grace any special dinner or supper table.

LOUISE DAVIES

—'Shopping List' (Home Service)

How to Treat Chilblains

Chilblains are areas of stagnant circulation in the skin brought on by cold. My own treatment is to soak the chilblain in hot water, steadily raising the temperature of the water until it is as hot as you can bear it. This dilates the surface blood vessels and stirs up the circulation. The skin should be dried carefully and if the chilblain is not broken, then a

further jerk can be given to the circulation by rubbing in embrocation or horse oils. This treatment should be repeated night and morning and it seldom fails. If the chilblain has broken this treatment is no good; you have a very slow-healing sore to deal with which needs medical advice.

There are drugs available nowadays, on a doctor's prescription, which taken as a tablet by mouth will dilate the skin blood vessels and they are a great help in treating chilblains. You can relieve the mad itching of a chilblain in two ways: either immerse it in a very hot bath or rub it with a block of ice from the refrigerator.

'TODAY'S' DOCTOR—(Home Service)

Notes on Contributors

EUGENE KAMENKA (page 60): studied Marxism at the Australian National University, Canberra; has taught philosophy in the universities of Sydney and Singapore
JOHN FERNALD (page 65): Principal of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art; author of *The Play Produced: a Manual of Stage Production*, etc.
R. T. WILKINSON (page 70): on the staff of the Applied Psychology Research Unit, Cambridge
C. J. GADD, C.B.E. (page 72): Professor of Ancient Semitic Languages and Civilizations, London University; author of *The Fall of Nineveh*, *Ideas of Divine Rule*, etc.
NINIAN SMART (page 73): Lecturer in the History and Philosophy of Religion, London University; author of *Reasons and Faiths*, and *A Dialogue of Religions*
NEVILL BARBOUR (page 79): Assistant Head of Eastern Services, B.B.C., 1948-56; editor of *A Survey of North-West Africa (The Maghrib)*
HENRY REED (page 91): poet and radio-

dramatist; author of *A Map of Verona*, etc.
W. G. HOSKINS (page 92): Reader in Economic History, Oxford University; author of *The Making of the English Landscape*, *Devon*, *Local History in England*, etc.
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PATRICIA HUTCHINS (page 96): literary critic; author of *James Joyce's World*
BURNS SINGER (page 96): poet; author of *Still and All*, and *Living Silver*
ANDREW BOYD (page 103): member of the editorial staff of *The Economist*
MARTIN SHUTTLEWORTH (page 107): has lived in Spain; current holder of the Drama Fellowship at Bristol University
C. HENRY WARREN (page 108): author of *England is a Village*, *Tyrolean Journal*, etc.
WINTON DEAN (page 113): critic and musicologist; author of *Bizet*, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques*, etc.

Crossword No. 1,598.

I Down 2 Across.

By pH7

Prizes (for the first three correct solutions opened): book tokens, value 30s., 21s., and 12s. 6d. respectively

Closing date: first post on Thursday, January 19. Entries should be on the printed diagram and envelopes containing them should be addressed to the Editor of THE LISTENER, 35 Marylebone Street, London, W.1, marked 'Crossword' in the left-hand top corner. In all matters connected with the crosswords the Editor's decision is final

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11								12	
13			14			15			
16		17		18	19			20	
21			22			23		24	
25	26			27	28	29			
30		31	32					33	
	34			35					
36	37			38		39		40	41
42			43		44		45	46	
47					48				

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

The seventeen unclued lights (35A and 36D are reversed) were all soundly 1D 2A, but they 33 1D. 27R was, perhaps, one of them that left 46 for London and graduated from 12 where 44 learnt to 8 34R words. Having seen that frightening play, 40, and learnt to 23AR&20R chow 29 with liberal use of 17 2D and sweet 31R, 44 presented a 4 24R 6R-Platonism; this 25 failed because 44 would use both sides of the paper and 23D 5. Disappointed, his 7 sailed via 34 in '39 Royal Oak', a three-masted 10, to catch 14 from a small 22 in 13's Bay, and later retired into 37R&4 35D Burlington 19, U.S.A. Here he disputes with friendly 29 on the existence of the 38 45R he tries unsuccessfully to feed 42&27 with 31R, which he waters with a 36A when the last 1D 2A up.

A=across; D=down; R=reversed

Solution of No. 1,596

M	U	L	T	S	I	T	E	R	I	N	E
U	D	A	L	A	L	S	O	D	O	G	E
D	O	R	I	C	E	H	A	I	N	H	E
I	T	R	E	A	T	A	P	S	L	E	E
R	I	N	S	E	P	O	T	E	S	T	E
P	L	A	Y	D	O	S	S	E	R	T	I
T	E	M	P	I	P	E	R	N	H	O	L
P	A	V	E	R	T	I	G	I	T	E	E
R	A	M	D	E	N	O	G	E	N	N	E
M	I	E	N	G	E	S	T	R	I	S	E
T	N	R	O	G	E	S	E	S	I	P	E
C	L	I	M	E	S	E	A	N	H	L	I
L	Y	T	E	D	E	E	R	A	G	E	N

NOTES

Across: 1, lectisternium (* it must recline); 11, log-o-Daedalus; 15, chillahedron (* Chilian horde); 16, tap—salt—erie; 21, septentriones (* tips enter ones); 24, peris—so—dactyl; 29, nephelometer (* three men pole); 32, ter—give—rsate; 36, end—anger—ment; 40, meistersinger (* times err singe); 44, epeirogenesis (* poise energies); 47, miscellanies (* a line slice MS); 48, degenerately (* gear de(f)ty ten).
Down: 1,* rum id; 2, Gudo; 3, lar—E; 4, 2 mngs; 5, (Scott)ish; 6,* stoats; 7,* ee lid; 8,* snore; 9, een rev; 10, l(cather); 12,* sial; 13, 2 mngs; 14,* togeth(er); 17,* lire; 18,* ope; 19,* tile; 20,* can E stress; 22, E man rev; 23,* diet; 24,* tramp—ic(y); 25, ye—rd; 26, o—pt; 27, (r)enter; 28,* Rh. shine; 30, (rac)e—go; 31, 3 mngs. 33,* lna—vly; 34, (l)ensile; 35, e'er. rev; 37, S. Johnson; 38, (l)egged; 39, nees—(lov)e; 41, gnome; 42, sec(c)r(e)t; 43, hidden rev; 45, (d)Ena(ry); 46, (s)pin(ncr).
* = anagram

1st prize: F. Hudd (Hastings); 2nd prize: Douglas Hawson (Malton); 3rd prize: F. G. M. Wheeler (Thetford)

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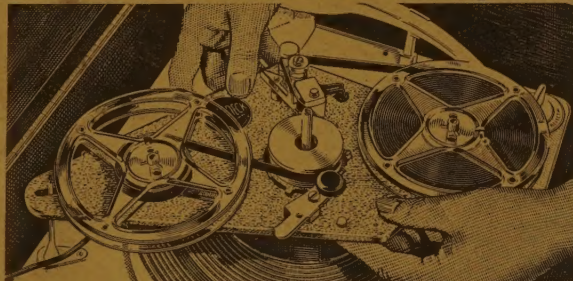
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